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CORRESPONDENCE

Disposing of Perot

Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.

To the Editors: From reading Irving Horowitz's article ["Waiting for Perot—Not," June 19], one would gather, now that Jerry Brown has been effectively muzzled, it is high time for the intellectual elite in the Democratic party to dispose of Ross Perot. Let's send in the heavy hitters—distinguished professor types—to warn the voters of the specter of fascism lurking behind a Perot presidency.

According to Professor Horowitz, Perot's "demand for efficiency in government....is a dangerous form of demagoguery." Would that we had more people in and out of government making such demands. As for "the faint whiff of authoritarianism" Horowitz finds wafting from Perot, this sounds like stereotyping to me. Before categorizing Perot as a potential demagogue, let Horowitz spend more of his considerable talents ferreting out authoritarian types among the Democrats and Republicans. Rap bashing and single-mother trashing seem to provide a good living for the leadership of both parties—and at taxpayers' expense.

As long as Perot remains prochoice, antigun, focused on the national debt and the need to create more meaningful jobs for people, and *idealistically* expecting more efficiency from government, I, and many others, will enthusiastically vote for him....

I'm waiting for Perot—yes, you bet.

ROBERT C. TASH

The writer is professor of sociology at Mercy College.

Voters as gamblers

Fayetteville, N.C.

To the Editors: Though I thoroughly enjoyed Professor Horowitz's article on Ross Perot, I must say that he has altogether missed the central force at work, something that is just beginning to register with political analysts. That force is the willingness of the great American middle class to take a gamble.

The middle class votes! It decides the outcome of national elections. The middle class feels betrayed and is thoroughly disgusted with politics as usual and with politicians in general. It is willing to accept the risk of "gridlock," and indeed relishes the prospect of political and possibly constitutional crisis. It wants change so badly that it will take a chance on Mr. Perot.

I will vote for Mr. Bush only because I cannot vote for anyone who approves of abortion. But I will bet that the next president will be decided by the House of Representatives. GEORGE C. STEWART, JR.

Dear Bishop...

Nashville, Tenn.

To the Editors: I share with you the following letter, which I have sent to all the bishops of the United States.

Dear Cardinal, Archbishop, Bishop:

We can recall the moving, terribly human scriptural story of the first Pentecost. The Apostles were confused, scared, depressed,

(Continued on page 29)

COMMONWEAL BUSINESS MANAGER

In the next six months, we will be adding a business manager to our staff. We are looking for someone to pursue the business interests of the magazine with vigor and intelligence, someone with promotion and business skills committed to working with a small staff and a limited budget to ensure the financial future of *Commonweal*. Previous experience with a magazine, small business, or nonprofit organization is a plus.

The business manager will work with the publisher and staff on a wide variety of business tasks. Initially those tasks will focus on marketing and promotion. Ultimately the job will include responsibility for circulation, promotion, fund-raising, development, and general business matters as well as supervising the business staff.

Anyone interested should send a résumé and a letter describing suitablity for the position and acquaintance, if any, with the magazine. Please include references and salary requirement.

Readers are invited to join in our search by passing on this announcement or by letting us know of potential candidates.

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Liberty for some

The Supreme Court's reaffirmation (*Planned Parenthood* v. *Casey*) of *Roe*'s basically unobstructed right to abortion in the first six months of pregnancy was disheartening, to say the least. True, the Court has seen its way clear to allowing restrictions that do not constitute an "undue burden" to women exercising the right—or, as the decision carefully puts it, their "liberty interest"—to abortion. Potentially most important, Pennsylvania's informed consent requirement was judged constitutional. Abortion opponents can demonstrate the persuasiveness of their case by making sure the information provided for "informed consent" is honest and respectful of a pregnant woman's unique vulnerability. If ignorance about what abortion actually entails is as widespread as some studies indicate, then the informed consent provision is good news for women and for the unborn.

But there is no disguising the setback represented by the Court's ruling. In going out of its way to endorse *Roe*'s agnosticism about fetal life, the Court perpetuates a mistaken judicial solution to a tortuous moral problem that other Western democracies have resolved through the legislative process. In taking the decision out of the hands of the states in 1973, the Supreme Court deprived the American people of the opportunity to reason together through the democratic process, and in so doing fashion a compromise that would acknowledge the legitimate interests of those concerned about the liberty of women and those who think that liberty must be qualified by the value of unborn life. It is hard to see how the Court's slight deviation from *Roe*'s insistence on abortion as a fundamentally "personal choice"—and especially its specious reasoning about the threat to the Court's legitimacy and authority if it admitted error in this instance—will do anything to ameliorate the abortion conflict. It is even more dubious for the Court to link the right to abortion with "the ability of women to participate equally in the economic and social life of the nation." How can the law pit women against their unborn children to secure the dignity of the former? Making abortion a prerequisite for equality defies common sense, moral logic, and the example of other countries.

In explaining its decision, the majority wrote with some eloquence that in legislating about abortion "the liberty of the woman is at stake in a sense unique to the human condition." True. But that unique condition also—and just as poignantly—pertains to the vulnerability of unborn life. In giving *Roe*'s understanding of a woman's autonomy veto power over all other moral interests, the Court, against all biological fact, turns its back on the interdependence that defines the beginnings of all human life. *Roe*'s moral agnosticism about the value of fetal life is, of course, of a piece with our larger political polarization and paralysis. Americans need to find more common ground—and with it common duties and obligations instead of isolating rights—on this and other divisive questions. In this challenging task this Court reveals itself to be part of the problem.

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WHAT CLINTON SHOULD DO

LET DEMOCRATS BE DEMOCRATS

The Democrats still have a chance in 1992, but this year's production of their quadrennial follies has already used its quota of pratfalls and missed cues. From now on, Democrats have to get it right, and that, beyond technical proficiency, challenges the party to rediscover its soul, the common ground of its past and future.

Bill Clinton continues to talk about broadening the party's base, but in the short term, the electoral arithmetic seems to go the other way. Ross Perot's support may decline, but he will remain a major factor in the campaign, and in a three-way race, 40 percent of the vote—even a vote in the high 30s—can easily be enough to win, outright or in the House. In these terms, while Democrats should try to win over defectors and independents, their first priority in the presidential contest of 1992 is not Reagan Democrats, but Mondale Democrats, and Governor Clinton should try to strengthen his claims on the party's old guard.

For example, Clinton's running mate, in addition to being "presidential" and endowed with "star quality," should be someone who reassures uneasy elements of the old coalition: General Colin Powell would be *nonpareil* although he is not likely to be interested, and there is a good case to be made for Bill Gray, Andrew Young, or Mrs. King, to say nothing of more orthodox possibilities.

Yet traditional Democrats are a stormy family: committed to "choice" by conviction and calculation, Clinton cannot afford to forget those party loyalists who oppose abortion on demand. The old coalition, uncertain even in this year's peculiar circumstances, will certainly be inadequate in elections after 1992. Democrats need new ways of singing their old songs, and part of their problem in 1992 is that, while Clinton has found some of the words, his rhetoric so far needs a bit more fire and much more melody.

Voters, especially in years like this one, listen for a measure of political poetry. They want candidates who champion their decencies and dignities, link their memories with their hopes, articulate their angers and anxieties, and in general, make sense out of the jumble of political experience. Governor Clinton has humor, a grace, but he has been prosy most of the time, and his polite smile and Southern modulations remind too many voters of Jimmy Carter's perceived inefficacy, despite the great differences between the two men.

Even Clinton's strength, his mastery of the details and complexities of government, is bound up with a Democratic weakness. As the party of the state, Democrats resemble A.J.P. Taylor's description of the British Tories in being prone to see history as the story not of ideas, but of administration. Recent Democratic candidates have shared a fatal inclination to identify policy statements with political speech. And sometimes, in Clinton's talk, the trees are almost as hard to see as the forest, obscured by analyses of leaf form, ramification, and the problem of the bark beetle. By itself, Clinton's knowledgeability only emphasizes how baffling government is for most of us. Bill Clinton is not an outsider and should not pretend to be. He can claim to be something more valuable, the *safe* candidate of change, an outsider who knows the traps in the corridors of power and can lead us through the maze. To win that role, however, Clinton has to emphasize his goals for America and the fact that he is tough enough to take us there, articulating a Clinton administration's promise of the first steps toward a new democratic covenant.

Given the fact that any solutions for America are bound to involve discomfort and sacrifice, Clinton does offer better prospects for leadership than either of his rivals. President George Bush, seen as able and even admirable in foreign affairs, has been a washout in domestic politics, his administration largely paralyzed by caution and the desire not to offend opinion as reflected in the most recent poll. And behind the snorting and stomping, Ross Perot sounds like more of the same, voodoo economics revisited. A few years ago, citizen Perot argued that higher taxes would be a necessary part of any effort to conquer the deficit; candidate Perot now says it can be done without raising taxes or even "raising a sweat" through a package of budget cuts that are vague, implausible, or inaccurate. When it was pointed out that cutting $20 billion from Social Security, as Perot has proposed, would actually cut off benefits well down into the middle class (all incomes over $50,000, by one estimate), Perot bobbed and weaved and said he had meant only to call for a voluntary surrender of benefits. Now of course, Bill Clinton did his own soft shoe often enough in the primaries, but even early on, Clinton was willing to pay the political price of his support for the free-trade agreement treaty with Mexico, and such evidences have been multiplying. Clinton's criticism of Sister Souljah, inevitably, got the most media coverage, but it is more important that Clinton is arguing in favor of higher taxes on upper-income Americans and warning that all of us will have to make contributions for the common good. It is also significant that Clinton has at least as much experience of leadership in democratic institutions as President Bush, and infinitely more than Mr. Perot. Perot's adult life has been lived in authoritarian institutions—the Navy, briefly, and private business—and his comment that the United States government is fundamentally a "business" seems to reflect his failure to grasp the goals or the practice of democratic life.

In fact, while there may not be many votes in it for Clinton and the Democrats, the most important issue of 1992 is not the economy, but the growing moral crisis of American democracy. National politics has always been a problem in a republic as large as the United States; all but a handful of citizens are limited to listening and to voting as trifling parts of a mass public. Democracy is at home in small places where citizens are more likely to matter and to have voices, and for most of our history, citizens were linked to national life by local govern-

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ments, parties, and associations. As those "mediating structures" have grown weaker, citizens have confronted a national government and national media that are hard to know and harder to hold to account. Even those Americans who go to the polls have been increasingly inclined to limit their political commitments (and this year, the cold war no longer supplies its negative reason for supporting the national government). The American electorate, after all, *created* the "gridlock" in Washington by giving Congress and the presidency to different parties, the rule now for almost a quarter century. And a growing number of Americans have come to the implicit conclusion that staying on the sidelines is the only way to salvage dignity from the wreckage of mass politics. The quality of consent, the foundation of public authority, is becoming dangerously thin.

Ross Perot is more symptom than solution. Emphatically a partisan of big government, Perot also advocates a dominant role for the executive, informed by a direct, technologically-assisted relation to the people. But on the most charitable interpretation, the "electronic town-hall" would not give citizens a voice or dignity, and at best, Perot's scheme would make citizens more effective consumers of public policy.

The Reagan and Bush administrations, of course, have forced the localities to take up responsibilities the federal government abandoned, but they also decreased federal assistance. Asking states and local governments to do more with less, their policy comes down to voodoo decentralization.

Clinton, by contrast, has been urging something like the genuine article, promising to thin the federal bureaucracy, while granting greater resources and discretion to state and local regimes. His approach opens the door to a modern Jeffersonianism, in which the federal government protects our rights—no need to tell a Southerner of Clinton's age that local governments can be oppressive—while otherwise transferring resources and authority to the local level. Bringing some of the government closer to home, Clinton's policy might prompt a general effort to rebuild communities, parties, and associations, or, more modestly, to repair at least a few cracks in the political foundations of the republic.

Still, the real electoral payoff for the Democrats lies in asserting their honored role as the party of the "little guy," the advocate of civic equality. Even Michael Dukakis eventually learned to say, "I'm on your side"; the Clinton campaign needs only to return to the theme of its most successful moments, the appeal to class across the barriers of race and ethnicity. Hard on the poor, the Reagan-Bush era has also begun to thin out the middle sectors; white-collar workers, witnessing layoffs, worry about the economic future, and even some conservatives speak, uneasily, about the tendency toward a "two-tier" society. Tax policy, generous to the well-to-do, has burdened the middle class through increases in the Social Security tax, and poor and middle-income Americans know or suspect that they have been paying too much of the bill for too few of the benefits. Americans are at least half-willing to make sacrifices for public goals, but they are not willing to be victimized: even more than tax cuts, they want fair shares. Since Democrats will need money for social programs, Clinton is surely right to propose higher taxes for higher incomes and to advocate limits to the corporate deductibility of executive salaries.

Beyond such specifics, however, Clinton is the only candidate to make economic *justice* an issue. Early on, Clinton argued that fairness, not growth and not reducing the deficit, ought to be the first item on the economic agenda, and that proposition has more staying power than the middle-class tax cut he was then promoting. Renewing that emphasis on economic justice would highlight the difference between Clinton and his opponents: both President Bush and Mr. Perot have been more or less indifferent to the problem, trusting that, given a healthy economy, distribution will take care of itself, a version of the old "trickle down" theory that ought to stir Democratic memories.

Of course, Perot has attracted considerable blue-collar support—despite an economic program Steven Holmes describes as "starkly pro-business"—by taking a hard line on foreign trade and by opposing the agreement with Mexico. Clinton, averse to protectionism, can't hope to match Perot on these terms. He can, however, emphasize his support for a ban on the permanent hiring of strike-breakers, a *sine qua non* for organized labor, and since it is a fair bet that Perot is opposed, Democrats should hound him to say where he stands. Clinton can also talk about other programs designed to help workers, like extended unemployment benefits. But most generally, Clinton should be arguing for a contemporary version of labor internationalism. It is, after all, a world economy in which the condition of American workers will depend on that of workers overseas. Without compromising his own internationalism, Clinton can make human rights the centerpiece of his international economic policy. He has already been critical of the administration's economic concessions to China, and it is no great step to the argument that the United States should not extend trade benefits to any country in which trade unions are not free and autonomous. Clinton and the Democrats should be pledging that they will not ask American workers to compete with oppressed labor in foreign countries (or at home, for that matter), and that they will not make American consumers accomplices in repression. And on these points, they can and should be hard as nails.

A party of civic equality needs to be vertebral, and not only because it will be opposed by all the inequalities of private power. Citizenship itself is a stern office, with at least as many obligations as rights. It is to Governor Clinton's credit that he speaks that language from time to time, finding a good word for the principle of national service and insisting that along with honorable work and equal treatment, decency and civility are among the things we owe to each other. John Kennedy, who drew Clinton into politics, urged us to ask what we could do for our country, but very little of that standard found its way into political practice. Perhaps, in 1992, Governor Clinton and the Democrats can begin to live up to that echoing legacy.

WILSON CAREY McWILLIAMS

Wilson Carey McWilliams teaches political science at Rutgers University.

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THE FIRST TEN YEARS

WHAT DO THESE MEN WANT?

On June 18, the first day of their three-day spring meeting, the U.S. Catholic bishops displayed a striking and perhaps unprecedented range of disagreement in debating the third draft of their pastoral on women's concerns (*Origins*, April 23, 1992). By contrast, a parallel meeting of groups gathered on the same Notre Dame campus to discuss women's issues, especially ordination, was amiable, even tame. If any at the alternative conference disagreed, they kept their opinions to themselves. Not so the bishops.

A committee of six bishops, chaired by Bishop Joseph Imesch of Joliet, Illinois, have been at work since 1982. They had begun by taking testimony from women around the country as well as from diocesan convocations. The first draft (1988), extensively quoting this testimony and giving voice to some of the most pressing of women's concerns, was sent back by the body of bishops for redrafting. Their own views and their teaching role were being stinted, the bishops thought. The second draft (1990) got close Vatican scrutiny. As a result, Imesch's committee went to Rome to discuss it with Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's Congregation on the Doctrine of Faith. The third draft bears the scars of this protracted treatment. Is the end in sight?

As the bishops began their meeting, there were predictions that criticisms of both "right" and "left" would combine to end the effort to produce a pastoral on women's concerns. Yet, as several bishops recognized, abandoning the effort would suggest that they had nothing to say at all. The key to their dilemma was captured by Charles Buswell, retired bishop of Pueblo, Colorado, who said at the Notre Dame meeting: "The document seems a response to our and the Vatican's concerns, not women's." Even so, several bishops argued that those hierarchical concerns were not forthrightly addressed, especially the nature of "radical feminism" and a reasoned defense against the ordination of women.

No official vote was taken on June 18. But a "straw vote," asking whether the bishops should continue the discussion at their November meeting, resulted in a virtual draw, suggesting the draft could not garner the two-thirds vote required for approval of a pastoral letter. As Imesch later said, passage would require "a miracle." From the proceedings, it seemed clear that regardless of whether this draft or a revised version is voted up or down, the bishops find themselves in a no-win situation.

Some of the critics were unrestrained. Bishop Austin Vaughan, a New York auxiliary, attacked the "procedures" involved in developing the letter, calling it "ridiculous" that this was the bishops' first debate of the text. He sharply criticized what he called lack of communication from the committee—"never a revelation of problems, no revelation of a minority report, no revelations of why seven women left the committee." In view of this process, Vaughan said, "If we were voting on the Hail Mary, I would vote it down."

Bishop Vaughan then moved on to matters of content, enumerating issues not addressed by the text, including "bad direction on birth control" in the confessional, "bare mention of single parents in poor areas," and "nothing on the plight of women who have given up a child to abortion." Most women, he said, rather than being concerned about women's rights "wonder how I can hold my family together and raise my children." The pastoral on women is "addressed to an intellectual elite" and repeats the church's positions on abortion and other matters "apologetically, as if we're stuck with it." But finally, in Vaughan's view the letter would "do no harm," because "nobody will read it after a week or cite it after a day."

Archbishop Rembert Weakland, a veteran of the pastoral letter writing business, agreed that people would not read it, but for him that was not a drawback, since he believes that the "process," which had "kept the issue out on the main stage," was the important thing. Still, Weakland urged the committee to "step back a bit and try it again." It was not, he said, "a healing" document. In view of the "many hurts among women on both sides," Weakland thought this was a shame. In places it was "brusque and harsh;" it was "not a good teaching tool."

Bishop John Sheets, S.J., an auxiliary of Notre Dame's own diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, was one of a disproportionate number of religious-order bishops who joined in the debate, in his case echoing Vaughan's fear of feminism. "Threats to the church from the women's movement" take on the character of "another religion." In Sheets's view, feminists have "a sense of evangelization, and [we have] no argument to resist it. We can at least alert the faithful that here is a threat to the church as never experienced before."

Bishop Francis George, O.M.I., of Yakima, Washington, wanted to know "Why is [the draft letter] not clear on who can be ordained? Why nothing about Christ's spousal relationship to the church, a position which is not controversial, and [nothing] about how Christ's leadership is made visible?"—an apparent reference to the necessity of an all-male priesthood. A little "cultural discernment" was in order.

James J. Byrne, retired bishop of Dubuque, reminded the bishops that, "we had a synod [in Rome], followed by a clear statement of the magisterial position. I do not understand, therefore, how people can discuss ordination [of women]." He urged the bishops "to make this clear to our people." Though he agreed that "sexism is surely a sin," his review of feminist theology over the past year led him to ask why the draft "make[s] no reference to what radical feminist theology is doing to our church."

Bishop Charles Chaput, O.F.M., Cap., of Rapid City, South Dakota, demanded of the now beleaguered Imesch, "Why are issues of radical feminism not dealt with?" Imesch attempted a reply, "We tried to keep it short. Ordination is not the only issue." He went on say, "Ten pages on why we don't ordain women would be out of proportion." But perhaps the more honest answer was Imesch's conclusion: "It's best not to try to explain."

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But Chaput pressed his question: "Why didn't we warn against the danger of radical feminism?" Bishop William Levada, of Portland, Oregon, also a committee member and with Imesch up front facing the bishops, tried again: "Our agenda was to be faithful to documentation. It was better to say less than more. This has been a long process...."

At this point, Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston entered the discussion. For him the draft could not be "a pastoral letter, [because] it fails to teach clearly." The draft, he said, "does not sufficiently analyze feminism in its cultural and philosophical roots. Nor does it analyze these roots from the point of view of the church." Feminism has "laudable goals," in the cardinal's view, but the push for women's ordination has made the "Eucharist a sign of division. Faith is relativized in light of one's personal experiences. The more negative aspect of feminism in the ecclesial context has to be faced."

Those who wanted to drop the pastoral offered some alternative suggestions. Bishop Raymond Lucker of New Ulm, Minnesota, asked for "a brief position statement acknowledging the process in which we asked how women are discriminated against and communicating our consensus that sexism is wrong and exclusionary language is offensive."

Bishop Pierre DuMaine, of San Jose, California, thought that a document "should be published in three parts: this [third] draft, the voices of testimony gathered in its preparation as a record of what the conference has done, and a few brief essays in reaction to it." He argued that "this will be as close as we can come to an honest exposition of our position."

"Publish the document and move on to continuing dialogue," urged Bishop Edward Head, of Buffalo, New York, who said he sensed "an impatience building among many active Catholic women. To hesitate further would give the impression of avoiding the issue."

Finally, and it would seem decisively, to the extent anything was decisive, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago, bent into a microphone and told the group, "I want to pursue this document. It would be a serious mistake to walk away from it, would give the wrong signal after all our discussion, as if we have nothing to say or don't have the courage to exercise our responsibility."

Moreover, for Bernardin, "the critical issue [was] ordination. We have to address it in a substantive way, so it doesn't look as if we are saying [since] we can't do anything about it, [we have decided to] say nothing." In a pastoral letter, the bishops "must show why we hold our position," and, in light of recent opinion-poll findings, "we have a lot of work to do on this." The letter, he concluded "needs more work. The majority would be in accord, I suspect."

In other words, back to the drawing board for version four.

But Bernardin did not have the last word. After him came Bishop John Cummins, of Oakland, who wanted "a little more exploring." This matter had aroused "more dissatisfaction at home" in Oakland, he said, than it had among the bishops. There had been a "universal change of consciousness among this generation," he said. "The people who disagree on this are among our very best people." As Robert Banks, auxiliary bishop in Boston, had said earlier, "There is anger, hurt, and a pervasive sense of being ignored." And he went on, "the church is sharply divided, even [among] some of our most committed members." The bishops ought to "be opposed to how society views women," and for the bishops as an all-male body (the afternoon's only reference to this fact), the obligation was even greater. And in the letter, he said, "we do little to explain the exclusion of women from positions of authority" in the church. "This is asked of me often. We have to explain our position."

Then came the "straw votes" leading to bare majorities in favor of bringing a revised version to the fall meeting and opposed to voting on producing a downgraded document, that is, a position statement or a committee report rather than a full-blown pastoral. Then dinner won out, and who could blame them?

In the press conference that followed, Imesch made and twice repeated his widely quoted judgment that it would take "a miracle" to get a women's pastoral passed in the fall. "Right now, I'm willing to take almost anything," he said, in reference to a question about a downgraded status for his ten years' work. Anyhow, he observed, "awareness is the most important thing," and "it's come, from this pastoral. We've heightened awareness of the concerns of women."

And then his colleague on the committee, Bishop Matthew Clark, of Rochester, New York, chimed in with this observation. "I'm moved to reflect on the teaching role of the bishop," he said. "As the bishop of a local church, I meet people every day for whom this teaching [of the universal church on women's roles] is not resting peacefully. There are huge questions out there to which we don't adequately respond by reinforcing our tradition. Until we do a [pastoral] job which puts us in touch with the hearts of our people, we'll limp along."

JIM BOWMAN

Jim Bowman, former religion editor for the Chicago Daily News, *is now a free-lance journalist.*

REPORT FROM ICELAND

A BISHOP'S CONCERNS

WHO WILL MINISTER IN A.D. 2000?

What quality of ministry will Catholics of the year 2000 need? What are the alternatives for priestly and pastoral service, particularly in the United States, as the year 2000 looms?

Perhaps tomorrow there will be a sudden upsurge in traditional vocations to the priesthood. Some say that today the seminaries that are strict are filled, that certain more old-fashioned religious communities have large numbers. Does this indicate an answer?

Do the priests of today and tomorrow need to be able to face ambiguity? Does such a need raise questions about the ability of a priest trained in a very strict formation of black and white, right

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and wrong, to cope with the ambiguities of today and tomorrow?

Are eucharistic services without a priest the answer? Such services have long existed in a number of places, for example, Brazil. Yet Brazil has become 40 percent Protestant. Is there a connection? Catholics in Japan survived for 256 years without priests in what may have been a heroic and unique episode in the history of the church.

Will the most ancient tradition of the church of East and West—married men called to the priesthood—be implemented in response to the need? Is the ordination of women a possible response? Scripture and apostolic tradition do not appear to rule out this possibility, but we have the consistent, unbroken disciplinary tradition of the Holy Fathers against the ordination of women. It has not been the wish of the popes to ordain women. One may wonder why women were not ordained in the early Christian era when many were prominent in the Christian community. Perhaps the psychosocial objections were too strong even in those days. In the early days, evangelization by a woman would have been nearly impossible. Even today in some parts of the world the same objections exist.

Might it be possible to recall some priests who resigned and married? Many fine men withdrew from the active ministry and chose marriage. This alternative would be contrary to the most ancient tradition of East and West. Nonetheless, some who left seem anxious to return to the ministry.

A call to the married would presuppose support for the spouse of the married priest. A priest's spouse is not meant to be cheap labor for the church.

In considering the challenge of church vocations in the United States, how will our percentages of practicing Catholics hold up? It appears that there is a practice-rate of better than 40 percent. This is very high compared with much of the world. Can this rate be sustained? But even if it were to fall as in many parts of the world to 10 percent or less, there would still be the need for church vocations.

Another underlying problem is how priests see and understand themselves. Do they see their position being diminished in society and in the church? Do they view their service as having ambiguous outcomes? Is there a reluctance to accept new priestly roles? How do priests relate in situations where lay leadership and authority have taken over formerly priestly functions, pastoral prerogatives, and pursuits? These new initiatives need preparation and even catechesis for priests currently in the ministry.

In recent recruitment and formation, have the standards of selection been too high, or in some areas, too low? Education—academic and spiritual—for the priesthood is long (and necessarily so). Our times do not require *less* preparation for ministry. So lead time, under any alternative, remains an important consideration.

The ordination of "Mass priests" has never been a success. There is much more to the sacramental ministry than an individual presiding at the Eucharist. It might well be that the development of such "Mass priests" following the Black Death (when many of the most dedicated people died caring for the sick) prepared the ground for the upheaval of the Reformation.

The small Diocese of Reykjavik, with only four parishes and 2,500 Catholics in an island nation of only 255,000, does not appear to be an area of critical pastoral shortages. We have thirteen priests, including an Air Force chaplain, three full-time students, and several priests over seventy, and we have two seminarians in theology. Yet even with these numbers, one can see the challenges and coming shortages. One parish is already without a regular pastor. And besides, not every priest is suitable, or ready, for pastoral responsibilities.

Some believe that there will be a new mission era in the United States, when priests and religious will come from Europe, Africa, and Asia. It has already started to happen, and with it there has developed a reverse language problem in which American parishioners are unable to understand their priests. Moreover, at times these priests have discovered that American parishioners are not ready to accept orders and a simple "right" answer to their problems. Some priests from abroad have even returned home, the ambiguity and ambivalence having proven too much for them. There are therefore serious misgivings about this particular alternative solution to the priest shortage.

Are there other alternatives?

Perhaps the consideration of "temporary vocations," despite the long preparation time, ought to be a serious option. In recent decades there has been a weakening of the permanent commitment (or "perpetual" commitment), as is evidenced in both the number of those priests leaving and the low initiation rates. Perhaps priestly service for ten years might be in order. As in all alternatives, there are problems.

One undeniable fact is that good priests are wearing out. The shortage is keeping them on the move, and some are being run ragged. Under such conditions, quality of service has to sag and health problems develop sooner rather than later. In some areas of France, for instance, Mass is celebrated only once a month by a pastor who has responsibilities for twelve parishes. Distance has always been a problem in some rural areas of the United States. But soon even urban and suburban parishes will experience similar problems.

This grinding down of priests is a catch-22 situation. A worn-out priest eventually gives the appearance of not being happy in his service. His situation does not draw young people, no matter how zealous, holy, and good a priest is—and most are!

It is annoying to present a problem without solutions. But there are none ready-made. There are possible alternatives, few seriously considered right up to the present time. All recognize that necessity is the mother of invention. Though a collapse eventually leads to decisions being taken, it would be preferable not to be faced with making them in necessity or in a state of collapse.

In presenting what I see as alternatives (and recognizing there may be others), I am not a strong advocate for one or the other. I do believe that some alternative or alternatives must be chosen, particularly since the lead-time for implementing them can be considerable. We need to prepare the Catholic people for such alternatives. Priests, people, and even bishops need time to consider possible adjustments. There is a critical need for catechesis, participation, and involvement in the choice of alternatives. In itself, this is a large pastoral, spiritual, economic, and psychological task, with its own dimensions and

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pressures. But such preparation and involvement are essential and in keeping with the spirit of Vatican II. Changes that come only from on high will face great difficulties, imperiling even the success of good alternatives.

Then there is another area of great need, one we have scarcely spoken of. It is the re-evangelization of the 60 percent who are not regular, practicing Catholics in the United States (not to mention larger percentages elsewhere). We have hardly begun to focus on this need.

Most of what has been written here concerns the United States. What of the whole Catholic world in the year 2000? "What to do?" as the late beloved Pedro Arrupe, General of the Society of Jesus, used to say! We need prayer, courage, imagination, and fortitude to undertake some action to meet the new millennium.

ALFRED J. JOLSON

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REPORT ON THE BALKANS

THE NEXT EXPLOSION

KOSOVO IN THE WINGS

The blood bath in what was Yugoslavia is, in all probability, not yet ended. Of its six former republics—Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Montenegro—three have already been internationally recognized: Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Macedonia, strategically placed between Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria, is apprehensively waiting its turn, and even the little republic of Montenegro, which earlier this year voted to stand alongside the unreformed Communist Serbia in the rump of Yugoslavia, is reconsidering its options in the wake of the appalling carnage in Bosnia-Herzegovina and UN sanctions against Yugoslavia. Within Serbia itself an ethnic mine field is waiting to explode. Serbia's 2 million-strong Albanian minority boycotted the elections on May 30. These Albanians live in colonial conditions in Serbia's impoverished deep south, particularly in the province of Kosovo, where 90 percent of the population is Albanian. They also spill over into Montenegro and into adjacent Macedonia, where numbering 700,000, they constitute about a third of the population. After Serbs and Croats, they were Yugoslavia's third largest national group, but they have never had a republic of their own.

To counter Serb aggressive tendencies, Tito (d. 1980) granted autonomy in 1974 to two provinces within Serbia, multiethnic Vojvodina in the north, and Kosovo. The Serb president, Slobodan Milosevic, rode to power in 1987 on the crest of an emotive campaign to protect the 10 percent Serb minority in Kosovo. Although an implacable atheist, he exploited the concern of the Serbian Orthodox church. Serbs claimed they were suffering genocide at the hands of Albanians. On closer examination, few Serbs had been murdered, but at the time there was a constant stream of Serbs moving north toward Belgrade as the result of surreptitious harassment and intimidation. They also felt they were being outbred and offered inflated prices for their property by local Albanians, who had cash provided by a closely knit network of Albanian migrant workers abroad. However, in no way could the plight of the Serbs be compared with the desperation the ethnic Albanians felt. They had been suffering virtual martial-law rule since their 1981 demonstrations for republican status within Yugoslavia. This, as the Reverend Gjerji Lush of Albania's 5 percent minority Catholic church points out, was the first popular movement for democracy in Eastern Europe after Solidarity in Poland.

The essential issue of conflict is that Kosovo, an inland plateau surrounded by mountains, is both Old Serbia and inland Albania.

With its splendid Orthodox monasteries, now beleaguered outposts in a region full of Albanians, Kosovo is the heartland of the Serb medieval empire. After their fatal defeat at Kosovo in 1389 by the advancing Ottoman Turks, most Serbs, under the leadership of their bishops, moved north to the Danube plain. They were gradually replaced by Albanians, most of whom converted to Islam. The Serbs continued their struggle against the Ottomans as frontiersmen in the Hapsburg empire. In the nineteenth century, they established another Serb kingdom, which in turn became the leading protagonist in creating modern Yugoslavia; and they regained Kosovo when the Ottoman Empire collapsed in 1913.

As their brutal assaults on Croats and Bosnian Muslims show, Serbs have very long memories. They have little in common with ethnic Albanians, neither language, religion, culture, nor script. Today some Serbs speak in terms of a Christian crusade against resurgent Islam. For their part, Albanian Muslims are casual and syncretist. Lush says that Kosovo is remarkable for its tolerance, and that there is no danger of so-called Islamic fundamentalism. In fact, Catholic Albanians in Kosovo are as firmly opposed to Serbs as are its Muslims. In 1990 both Muslim and Catholic clergy persuaded ethnic Albanians to renounce the

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blood feuds that were draining the nation's life away. However, a largely unemployed younger generation affected by secularism and Western values could quickly turn to violence.

Milosevic cashed in on Serb memories in a big way in 1989, the six-hundredth anniversary of the Serb defeat at Kosovo. Serbs from the north, most of whom had never set a foot in the region, were bused there for fevered rallies at which Milosevic's portrait was paraded like an icon. To his credit, the Orthodox bishop, Pavle, an ascetic monk and a conciliator, highly respected by the Albanians, forbade his priests to get involved. Pavle is now Serb patriarch.

The Albanians, too, have memories. They claim to have been in Kosovo long before the Slav migrations. In the last century, the Albanian independence movement was launched from Prizen in Kosovo in 1878. They cannot forget how after both World Wars the European great powers allowed the creation of an "artificial Yugoslavia based on injustice and Serb hegemony," to quote Lush, instead of awarding Kosovo to the newly independent Albania. Nor can they forget how between the wars Serb-dominated Yugoslavia treated Kosovo as a colony, drove many Muslims to leave for Turkey, and tried to replace them with Serb settlers. Not until the late 1960s did Communist Yugoslavia inject capital to develop the backward province and build a university in Pristina. But Tito's death in 1980 left Kosovo's Albanians without a protector. Since then there have been over 100 deaths and 10,000 imprisonments at the hands of the police.

In 1990 the Serb parliament unilaterally revoked Kosovo's autonomy, abolished its government and legislature, and subjected the province to even more draconian military and police control, while supplying local Serbs with arms. They occupied the university, fired 100,000 government employees, including teachers and doctors, and brought many families to the brink of starvation. They appropriated hospitals, Albanian radio, television, and newspapers, and 70 percent of the factories. On the most contentious issue of all, last fall 6,000 teachers were fired for refusing to give up the Albanian curriculum for primary and middle schools. Serbs and Albanians now live in two different worlds. Albanians compare it to apartheid.

The Albanian response has been marked by unity, self-restraint, and resourcefulness. Under the academic, Ibrahim Rugova, leader of the 700,000-strong Democratic Alliance, they have virtually created a state within a state.

In 1990 leaders of the dissolved parliament met secretly and proclaimed the so-called "Kacanicka Constitution." A year later, in September 1991, hiding their ballot boxes from Serb police, ethnic Albanians overwhelmingly endorsed it by referendum. This May, they again ran the gauntlet of the security forces, risked arrest and ballot box confiscations, and elected their own parliament and president. Schooling has gone underground, with 400,000 children boycotting classes in favor of private home schools. Attendance and good performance has become a point of pride in the eyes of parents and pupils alike. All this despite their terror at giving Serbia a pretext for opening a new front in Kosovo and massacring them. The Albanians are only too aware of the fate of the Croats and Bosnians. With sanctions against Serbia biting and disaffection spreading there, Milosevic could blitz Kosovo to provide a diversion. He has the hardware.

And now, there is an extra player in the wings. During the four decades of Enver Hoxha's Communist tyranny in the neighboring state of Albania, secession and union with Albania proper was not an option. But in 1991 Albania repudiated Communist rule, and last October it recognized the clandestine Kosovo government. During a visit to Washington last month, Albanian President Sali Berisha told President George Bush that he was deeply concerned about new threats against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. With the collapse of communism in Albania, the avowed aim of Kosovan Albanians is now reunion. But communism reduced Albania to third-world status, and it is on the verge of total collapse. Kosovans, impoverished themselves, would have to make even greater sacrifices to unite with Albania. Yet it is a price they seem willing to pay. Moreover, Macedonia's restless Albanians also seem ready to secede.

The Balkan powder keg is ready to explode.

JANICE BROUN

Janice Broun is Eastern European correspondent for News Network International.

OF SEVERAL MINDS Abigail McCarthy

THE NEWS FROM WABASHA

WHERE ALL THE CHILDREN STAY EQUAL

This past June, headlines drawn from the 1990 census report were alarming: "Striking Stratification of U.S. Society," "Middle Class Shrinking," "Poverty Increases and Spreads," and the most dire of all, "The End of Equality." We cannot dispute the census facts that engendered these headlines. We are challenged as a nation to change them. I puzzled over these reports as they appeared, and puzzle over them now, trying to draw from my experience some clues to how equality is created and how inequality is remedied.

This June, as during every June, people all across America were getting together. They were going to graduations, weddings, anniversary parties, college and high school reunions, rites of change and memorial of all kinds. Anthropologists of the future might well think that we as a people had an inordinate addiction to celebration.

This year my Midwestern extended family was no exception to the general pattern. Cousins from Minnesota were going to a family wedding in California; others were on their way to a college graduation in New York. My brother went from the city of Washington to Minnesota for

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a granddaughter's graduation from the eighth grade (yes, they still have those in some Minnesota schools), and then on to a family reunion. And my sister journeyed from Seattle to our mutual high school reunion.

On June 13 and 14, the St. Felix High School classes of 1933, '34, '35, '36, and '37 met for a banquet, a memorial Mass, and a breakfast in my hometown—a town of which long-time and patient *Commonweal* readers have read before—a lovely little town on the Mississippi in the bluff country of Minnesota. (The bluff country is that part of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois that was unglaciated and where water melting from the glaciers carved deep river valleys through the layers of limestone and sandstone.) There were eighty of us in all—a very good representation because our high school classes had never numbered more than thirty or so.

Some of us hadn't seen each other for sixty years but it was extraordinary how close we felt at once and how quickly we bridged the gaps. Our small town and our small Catholic coeducational high school have always commanded unusual loyalty. The pull of home has always been strong for those who had lived or gone to school there—not, for most of us, the pull to permanent return but the pull of our roots, the pull of the places that began our formation and marked us forever.

That pull had brought back alumnae and alumni from Alaska, California, and Washington, from Arizona, Florida, and Tennessee, from Chicago and the nearby cities of Wisconsin and Minnesota to unite with those who had stayed to run the bank, the hardware store, or the family farm. Why, I wondered, were we so comfortable with each other? What made us feel almost like brothers and sisters?

Most of those at the reunion were retired but, when working, had ranged in occupation from successful businessmen, college professors, government officials, and lawyers through owners of small farms, construction workers, and railroad maintenance men; but the spirit of our gathering was remarkably egalitarian.

The town, during my lifetime, at least, has always struck newcomers as relatively classless. The Reverend Robert Crosbie, for example, who married a local young woman, has remarked on his amazement when they retired there. He had grown up in Exeter, New Hampshire, where his father was a master at the famous and exclusive Exeter preparatory school. "In Exeter it was very much town and gown," he said. "The town service people were apt to be more resentful than friendly. But here, where Mary's family's business was one of the two biggest employers, the electrician, the trash collector, the woman who comes to clean, etc., all look on her as an old friend and treat her that way."

Perhaps in part this sense of self-esteem and equality stemmed from the fact that most residents of our town were not far removed from their pioneer forebears. It also stemmed, I think, from the fact that we, no matter what the economic or professional status of our families, shared common experiences. We benefited from a community with a strong commitment to children and education. There were two very good high schools, a good public library, town and high school teams, bands, and sources of recreation—scout troops, swimming lessons at the town beach, 4-H clubs, amateur theater, and groups of our own invention; and of course, the hills and the countryside to roam. All these were our common bond.

We in the reunion group were, it is true, children of the Great Depression. We told tales of working for ten cents an hour after school, of classmates who spent summers following the wheat harvest from Kansas and Nebraska through Montana and the Dakotas into Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and those who returned late to school in the fall after working fifteen hours a day as cabin boys on Mississippi work boats. One of the most successful—reminiscing—attributed to himself a well-worn Depression story: "The soles of my shoes were so thin that I could stand on a dime and tell whether it was heads or tails."

But, poor as we might have been, we were helped by the existing public mechanisms provided by taxes and private giving, and were soon to be helped even more by the emerging New Deal. The National Youth Administration kept us in school and, later, the GI Bill saw many through college and into the professions.

In keeping with *Commonweal*'s usual summer schedule, only one issue is published each month during July and August. The next issue will be dated August 14.

Our farmers profited from governmental subsidies; our banks were saved from failure by the federal government; small businesses started with loans.

And today we are of the only social group, according to the reports, in which poverty has not increased. We are cushioned by Social Security and Medicare and, in some cases, by strong county and state programs. In Wabasha, a resident of a retirement home paying $2,000 a month may live next to one in the next apartment who pays nothing at all. The county takes care of the latter on the basis of need. Life for both is made pleasant by a corps of local volunteers.

All very well, you say, to talk of equality and income distribution in a community relatively homogeneous with few foreign-born or members of minorities. A point well taken, but it still seems to me that Wabasha is a case study—a pilot example—of the remedy for inequality proposed by author Mickey Kaus in *The End of Equality* (Basic Books):

> The institutional basis for the egalitarian culture would be an expanded "public sphere" of community life. That sphere could include old institutions, such as the draft, and new ones, such as national service....Democrats could easily add a national health-care system and a national day-care system....These institutions would drive home the moral arbitrariness of capitalist success by the crude expedient of treating all income classes equally, and the more subtle strategy of providing a part of daily living enjoyed by various classes on an equal basis....

Isn't that what I learned at my high school reunion? "Equal dignity in the public sphere" (Kaus's phrase) depends on adherence "to society's basic values of work and civility." □

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QUAYLE SAYS IT RIGHT

BUT DOES IT WRONG

Two things need to be said about Vice-president Dan ("Mr. Potatoe Head") Quayle and his crusade in favor of "family values" and against the "cultural elite." First, Quayle is right. Second, Quayle is a hypocrite.

What he says is true. There really is a cultural or social elite which, for the past generation, has been waging a relentless war of attrition on traditional beliefs and values. These are the proponents of what, for want of a better term, may be called yuppie liberalism.

These people are well-educated and well-heeled. They belong to the professional and managerial classes (the classes, incidentally, whose material lot has improved under Reagan-Bush-Quayle, while the material condition of the rest of the population has deteriorated). Their influence on American cultural life is greatly disproportionate to their numbers, since they dominate many cultural command posts, especially the media, the arts, and (to a lesser degree) the academy.

On religious matters, they are strongly secularist. They are agnostic or quasi-agnostic. They attend church or synagogue infrequently or not at all. On moral matters, they are relativists or subjectivists. They generally regard values as matters of pure personal choice. They see all values and forms of life, apart from downright criminal values and careers, as basically equal.

The social theory of yuppie liberalism makes a sharp distinction between the private and public realms. Religion and morality must be confined to the private realm, but within that realm individuals must be guaranteed absolute freedom. The public realm must remain rigorously neutral regarding religion and morality—except that it must promote those values which preserve and protect the sanctity of the private realm, namely, freedom, cultural equality, and tolerance.

The sexual revolution has been the preferred instrument for advancing yuppie liberalism's broader cultural agenda. One of its principal dogmas is that sex and everything connected with sex are purely private matters. Thus the public has no right to object to nonmarital or nonconventional sex. Sex is a private affair—even when this "private" activity produces such high levels of out-of-wedlock birth that entire neighborhoods and cities are devastated as a result. Sex is a private affair—even when this "private" activity produces escalating rates of sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS, which overburden publicly supported health-care systems.

It follows from this dogma that the right to abortion must be protected. And if anyone objects to this on the grounds that the fetus is human, the objector must be instructed that this is a moral or religious judgment and therefore inappropriate in the public realm. The gay rights agenda must be advanced. And if anyone objects on religious grounds, then the objector is homophobic and his or her religious beliefs are, on this point at least, no better than bigotry. Condoms must be distributed in urban high schools. And if anyone objects on moral grounds, the objector will be told that this is a health issue, not a moral issue.

The married two-parent family may be a good thing. But so, says yuppie liberalism, is the unmarried two-parent family; and so is the divorced single-parent family; and so is the out-of-wedlock single-parent family; and so is the gay or lesbian family; etc. It's all a matter of personal choice, of cultural diversity. No one can say which is better or which worse.

Now, if you have been living on the moon for the last twenty-five years or so, you may have missed many of these developments, and you may think Dan Quayle is attacking a straw man. But it's no straw man. It's a reality—to my mind a very pernicious reality, which I have been writing about in this column for years. And no matter how little sympathy I may have for Quayle personally or for the silly grin he has on his face when he makes these attacks, I have to admit that he has hit the nail on the head.

But now for the flip side of the coin—Dan Quayle the hypocrite.

Hey, look (as President George Bush likes to say, in his regular-guy style of eloquence): if you believe in family values, then you ought to do something to promote the conditions that support and encourage those values. But the Reagan-Bush-Quayle regime, while talking a good game about family values, has done little or nothing to protect them in the practical order. For the past twelve years, this regime has been all talk and no action.

There are five social conditions a family needs if it is to be successful in its fundamental task of raising children: (1) good jobs and income; (2) decent and affordable housing, preferably a home owned by the family; (3) good schools; (4) neighborhoods for kids to grow up in that are free of crime, drugs, and premature sex; and (5) adequate health insurance.

Simply to draw up this catalog is to point out how poor a record the Reagan-Bush-Quayle team has. The people in the top 20 percent of American society are doing okay, but the lower 80 percent are not doing very well anymore, and the bottom 20 percent are living in a state of downright misery. Family values have deteriorated, yes. But the social conditions for successful family life have also deteriorated, and people who shout loudest about family values—Quayle and Bush—have a lousy record on family conditions.

In the mouth of Dan Quayle, the "family values" theme is, I'm afraid, intended to be the opium of the middle classes. And if the Democrats are dumb enough to let him get away with it—that is, if they refuse to seize the family values issue themselves—then they can count on losing yet one more presidential election. □

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A SUMMER PILGRIMAGE

FROM NEW HAVEN TO THE PIAZZA NAVONA

WILLIAM DI CANZIO

This essay begins in Piazza Navona in Rome, inside the church whose design so inspires the square, Sant'Agnese in Agone, under its startling dome. A few minutes before the 10:30 Mass in English was to begin on the nineteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time, I found myself smiling at the divine comedy of the church's decoration, where sculpted reliefs, their stone supple as music, transfigure martyrdoms into opera, and where the laughter of the musical angels who frame the reliefs ascends and echoes in the frescoed clouds of the dome. There, at the summit, nearly lost to sight in the sunlight of the lantern, mirth and music mingle with the image of the Spirit descending.

But I was not supposed to be there, and I was not supposed to be alone. I was supposed to have met my friends, Madeleine and Elisabeth, yesterday in Vienna; we would have spent a few days in that city, eating pastries and joking, and then would have traveled together by boat to Budapest. It sounded perfect when we planned it, but something frightening, which we did not understand, had happened to Jennifer, the oldest of Madeleine's three teen-aged daughters—the levelheaded, the studious one, the sophomore at Bowdoin.

Madeleine had called me nearly two weeks ago from Zurich; I was still in Connecticut then, staying at her house with the two younger daughters. She asked me to travel down to Kennedy Airport to meet Jennifer, whom she was sending home from Switzerland, where the girl had been waitressing for the summer. I balked at the request—I hated that ugly trip, which would cost me the better part of a day. What was wrong, anyway? Couldn't Jenny get on a bus by herself? But I complied. When I saw Jennifer, I recognized her mother's wisdom: she was changed, not the bright, confident, varsity swimmer I knew her to be. Rather, with her pushcart full of hand-me-down bags, she seemed pathetically confused and scared.

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"Jennifer, Jenny!" I called, jumping and waving in the crush at the international arrival gates. Instead of smiling, she frowned a worried frown and said, "Did I really go through customs? Why didn't they open my bags? Will they make me go back? Should I go back? Are you sure?" These questions would be repeated, out of nowhere, a half-dozen times on the ride back to New Haven, when I could not help but note, with some self-pity, that it was becoming my mission to be what I was never taught to be in graduate school, a wound-dresser.

In two years at my current job as a college dean, I had witnessed the breakdowns of eight undergraduate women and four men. I had found myself, with my modicum of academic authority, sometimes clung to as reluctant savior, sometimes reviled in place of the father who might be absent from their lives. I had watched illness usurp their minds and drain the strength of their friends, of their families, their teachers, and even, or maybe most especially, of me.

Now I was riding the bus back from Kennedy with Jennifer, trying to answer her repeated questions with patience, to speak lovingly and reassuringly, not to betray my exasperation with my eyes, but all the while feeling that this was not fair, not after the year I had just lived through. When my students became ill, still they were my students, not my children, and there was a reasonable limit to my involvement. Here, though, was the child of the friend whom I had grown more and more to esteem in the five years of our acquaintance, of whose family I felt a part. What was the limit now?

Our vacation plans had begun to take shape last April, on the way to Easter dinner in Fairfield, which would prove to be a delightful event hosted by cousins of Madeleine. From the driver's seat, she gave me a how-much-can-I-get-away-with glance and said, "You know, you really get old and cranky when you teach." At that moment I resolved to accept an invitation previously declined as an extravagance: to join her and Elisabeth, a native of Zurich, for the last of their three summer weeks together in Europe. We would rendezvous in Vienna. I could go a week early, stay at Elisabeth's apartment, while she and Madeleine were in Salzburg; I could visit another friend of mine in Basel, maybe go hiking in the Alps. So it was settled, and I felt a confident joy: folks would remark, "You deserve it." Other

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pieces were likewise falling into place: Elisabeth had found Jenny a summer job in Switzerland, waitressing at a country inn, where she could practice her French and earn the money she needed for school next year. What could be better?

Then what went wrong? From time to time in May and June, Madeleine received transatlantic phone calls about behavior unlike Jenny. First it was the job at the inn: the place was too remote, she said; the customers, old farmers; there was no one her age; she felt lonely and isolated. Could she come home? But the return ticket, for the end of August, had been bought at a good price far in advance. Then Elisabeth's parents intervened, arranging another job for her near Zurich at the restaurant of one of their neighbors. She would be welcome to stay at their house. But the U.S. girl dumbfounded this fastidious Swiss couple in their seventies, with her sloppy bedroom and erratic behavior. She moved out; she moved back in. Now there was a new boyfriend, and an older, married man at the restaurant "coming on" to her. Was this really Jenny?

Meanwhile, near the end of July, Madeleine departed to begin her vacation by meeting Elisabeth in Zurich, where she would of course see Jennifer and assess the situation herself. I had offered to spend the week between her departure and mine at her house in Guilford with her two younger daughters, aged eighteen and sixteen. While Madeleine trusted that the girls would not need supervision, especially since neighbors had volunteered to stop by daily, still it would be reassuring to have an adult in the house with them for at least part of the time of their mother's absence. Besides, in my case, since we all really enjoy one another, it would be fun, and a respite for me from downtown New Haven and the forsaken-for-the-summer fortress where I live at Yale, Trumbull College.

On arriving in the suburbs, I relished the contrast with my ivy castle: the sunny parlor, its windows opening onto grass and trees, the profusion of feminine patterns and colors, Pierre the cat posed on the couch, the spaniel puppy Spencer given the run of the house. This sentimental appreciation evanesced next morning, when I discovered that Spencer, whom I'd gotten out of bed twice to walk during the night, evidently believed that, like the folks he lived with, he too should wait till he got back inside to "go." Not only had he "gone" with astonishing vigor all over a vulnerable pink rug, but, while being spanked, he stepped in the mess and spread it to furnishings yet unsullied.

So I leashed him on the back deck till the younger daughter, whose charge was his care, should wake from her slumber on the couch in the family room, where I noticed I had inherited yet another sixteen-year-old girl, a best friend who routinely spent the night, snoozing on the love seat nearby. The older daughter meanwhile, tired from the long hours of her job at the bagel shop, would remain hermetically sealed in her bedroom till fifteen minutes before she needed a ride to work.

I am not complaining about the girls. To the contrary, Madeleine has done a remarkable job of raising them: they are thoughtful, loving, intelligent, and, incidentally, beautiful. When I gave the sixteen-year-old a firm set of instructions, she carried them out cheerfully: Spencer could not come back into the house until she had bathed him; we would honor her mother's enjoinder that she sleep in her bedroom, where her friend would be welcome to a sleeping bag on the floor; but first the room would have to be redeemed from its fallen state. (It was now in such chaos that when Spencer, who had annexed it as his den, had an "accident" in there, two days passed before it was discovered.) Everything that could be washed would be washed in very hot water, including the rug, which had acquired fleas. And we would invest in a housebreaking manual.

Later I regretted "coming down" so hard on my sixteen-year-old pal. "I'm sorry if I sounded like a dictator," I said, "moving in and giving you orders."

"Oh Bill," she said, "we didn't think you sounded like a dictator; we thought you sounded like a father, and I've never had one of those."

I was even ready to give Spencer a smooch, till I found him cutting his sharp little puppy incisors on what I gasped to recognize as my Mont Blanc fountain pen.

With the phone ringing and the suburban necessity of driving everybody everywhere, I was learning that even to manage

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a small household tends to become a full-time job—or, worse, that there was no predicting the demands that the business of life might make. As for Freud's observation that we all need work and love: my academic work, which I was naive enough to have brought with me, was going undone, and, in spite of the presence of grown children, I was lonely for someone to talk to.

Then Jennifer. "It's worse than I thought," Madeleine said to me on the phone from Zurich, "She's had a breakdown. Elisabeth and I have done nothing but talk to her for three days. I want to send her home—somewhere she feels safe." She gave me instructions about taking her to a therapist who knew the family. At home, Madeleine thought, seeing the therapist, resting, with people who love her—me for a few days, and then another family friend who would be available after my departure—Jennifer would be all right until her mother's scheduled return.

I conceived this essay by a pond on a tranquil July morning. Jennifer was in the therapist's office in his house in this lovely New England setting. I was waiting for her on a bench outside, gazing at the water and the trees, not reading the book of theatrical theory I had brought. Rather I was praying. My prayer, like my other creative efforts, suffers from interruption and stress, but indeed now I was praying, miserably and selfishly as the most desolate kvetching psalmist.

My prayer mingled with what I knew of Madeleine's life: the alcoholic father, the Southern lady of a mother, who had evoked the scorn of her family for marrying a Yankee and who eventually would be hospitalized, while Madeleine was still a girl, after a mental breakdown; Madeleine's own elopement at nineteen with an actor; her family's disowning her; the couple's life in the theater in the 1960s; her anorexia, bulimia, and the beginnings of a dangerous acquaintance with drugs; then her conversion to Christianity, the healing of the eating disorders, the joyful pregnancies that followed; the gradual manifestation of her husband's alcoholism, his paranoiac breakdown while a student at the Yale Drama School; his attack and beating of her a few weeks after the third birth, witnessed by the four-year-old Jennifer; then divorce, annulment.

A couple of months ago she had been offended by a homily, delivered by her pastor, in which he held that spouses should love each other because children first learn about love from the environment of their parents' marriage. He made no mention of, had no help to offer the widowed, the divorced, the never-married, who struggle to raise children on their own. Madeleine approached him afterwards, told him of the pain of being thus excluded, of her need, in fact, for even more of the church's support than it offers couples. She wished to resign her eucharistic ministry in the parish and go elsewhere. He asked her not to go, but rather to stay and help him, and to speak in church on Corpus Christi.

She spoke of her conversion and what followed: of the financial reality of being divorced from a man incapable of supporting his three children, aged four, two, and six weeks; the harsh consequences of being alienated from her family; of never having finished college herself, therefore being without the education even to seek a job. In the early days, members of Saint

Thomas More at Yale provided her some money, for which she gratefully accounted to the penny. She enrolled on welfare, while, with scholarships, she finished college and earned a master's degree in special education. For sixteen years, she had fed, housed, clothed, and raised the three children, whose lives, she felt, daily called her out of her despair. In all of this, she most solidly trusted in Providence. Eventually she was reconciled with her family; her mother's death two years ago released an inheritance which allowed her to make the down payment on the house in Guilford, the first house her daughters had ever lived in.

She never said what was understood by those of us who listened: that the struggle was also a painful redemption, that the young actress who might have starved herself to death for her looks, had lived to become this splendid woman, whom honesty made eloquent. She also never named Elisabeth, but I knew the difference Elisabeth made. The elegant Swiss heiress, with her English so perfect one forgets she must be even more charming in her native German, was now director of Caritas, the Catholic Relief Service, in Lucerne. She had been writing a dissertation at Yale in 1978 when she met Madeleine at a prayer service. Though she returned to Switzerland, over the years the friendship had grown deeper—Elisabeth helping with clothes, books, other bills, contributing to Jenny's tuition, phoning weekly, often visiting at Christmas, and making sure that Madeleine had, at her expense, the yearly sabbath of a vacation with her.

Waiting for Jenny by the pond, I both resented the burden I had accepted and wanted to protect Madeleine. She needed this time away. My few days in her place made me understand her life as I had not before, convincing me that single parents are the heroes of this age. What a price one pays who is expected to do what two must often struggle to do. And loneliness increases the load. After caring for Jennifer for hours in her illness, I needed someone to care for me, but there was no one. How would Madeleine be able? How could she work all day

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at her job with emotionally disturbed children in the slums of Bridgeport and come home, by herself, to this?

Jennifer was weeping when she came out of the office. The therapist wanted to see her again next morning. I had planned to spend the day in New Haven, tying things up for my departure, but that would have to wait. Instead I took her to lunch, for ice cream, to the lake, whatever I could think of. She broke down into a fit of sobbing after Spencer chewed an old pair of her reading glasses. Her sister tried to talk sense to her, "He's only a dog, Jen, and he's here, and he's going to stay."

Sleepless that night, I doubted I could leave as scheduled; yet I felt that if I did not get away and recover myself, the demands of the coming academic year would do me in. I tried to call Madeleine and Elisabeth in Salzburg for advice: no answer.

Peter E. Murphy

The Tuning

Stan the jazzman who turns
breath into sound, into music
comes to my house to tune
the piano my daughter
has stopped playing

He winds his black fingers
along the white keys, plucks
each string, picks out the sorry notes
like a field hand in February
when the field is covered by ice.

The music moves throught the halls,
through the sorrow in this house
like smoke. It rises toward the attic,
through the vents
where the wind lifts it away,

and Amanda comes out of her room
where for months, her hands
have been holding her head,
and she touches Stan's fingers
as if to say she would like to go on.

The wind outside, light from the blinds
the photographs on the piano,
the keys—
I must touch these, she says.
I must lift them.

Stan listens to her song, nods
his head, says Call me
when it's out of tune.
Call me when you want me
to come by again.

Should I call Madeleine's sister in New Mexico? Would that help, or only escalate anxieties? I decided to ask the therapist next day if he thought Jenny was well enough to stay without an adult until Madeleine's other friend, Celia, should return to Guilford on the weekend. If he said yes, fine; if no, I'd take it from there.

Next morning, whatever had so disturbed Jenny seemed strangely put to rest. She came out of the therapist's office smiling, cheerful, ready, she said, for a new haircut. He believed she could manage quite well on her own until Celia's arrival. I spent the day running my postponed errands and, hoping for the best, departed next day as scheduled.

The plane ride calmed me. When I finally sat on Elisabeth's bed in Zurich, at dawn and tipsy with jet-lag, I thought, "My system's too screwed-up to sleep"; when I woke, it was mid-afternoon.

I called Guilford. Celia would be arriving in the evening and had already invited Jenny to her house for a meal. Good. I called Basel. My friend had departed for the U.S. for a conference that morning and would be returning the day of my departure. So much for the alpine hike. But it wasn't really the failed hike that disappointed me: rather, after a lonely summer and my taste of single-parenting, I was craving company. I called Salzburg. No answer. The innkeeper would leave a message for the ladies. So I took a stroll, enjoyed the twilight on Lake Zurich, had an awkward restaurant meal alone, looked longingly at the crowds at hundreds of cafe tables.

Elisabeth called next morning. She interrupted my chatter about meeting in Vienna: Madeleine had spoken with Celia, who said that Jenny had swung down again and advised her immediate return to the U.S. They would take the train back to Zurich as soon as possible and try to book a flight to New York.

All of which happened, but not before Elisabeth heroically chose to accompany Madeleine home. I call the choice heroic not just because of the sickening expense of last-minute air tickets, nor because Elisabeth, who holds a hard job herself, could have stayed and had a real vacation with me as planned, but because Madeleine, anxious, overwrought, frustrated with the details of this abrupt departure, with clerks and computer printouts keeping her from her child, exploded in a series of scenes, full of reproach, scenes that exposed the scars of her long ordeal as a parent alone. "You talked me into it," she said to Elisabeth, "I never wanted her to come to Switzerland to work—my instinct knew she wasn't ready, but no, you ganged up on me, you and her, the two of you—"

"But I went abroad to work when I was even younger," said Elisabeth.

"You think she's some rich kid—like you," said Madeleine, "but she's nothing like you. My Jenny grew up on welfare." We were walking from one crowded cafe to another in the Zurich dusk, looking for a place to sit. I mostly kept silent, sometimes stepping close to Madeleine to take over as primary listener, while Elisabeth, dazed, would hang back a few feet. I tried to joke about the American jeans in the designer shop windows. Finally Madeleine's rage was exorcised, and Elisabeth's loyalty, sorely tried, prevailed. I saw them off at the airport next morning.

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So I was left in Zurich with a return ticket dated nearly two weeks later, but with no itinerary, with no one. I sadly realized that my friends and I might have had fun while in a pizza parlor in New Haven, but alone like this, all Europe looked bleak.

Then why not give in, why not rest awhile in Zurich, with Elisabeth's apartment, the lake, the "beaches" and the *baden*, where the Zurichers accept the naked body with such nonchalance and trust that they may enjoy their city as they do their homes? Why did this feel like the Land of the Lotus-Eaters? What was missing? A shrine? A summit? A quest? After a single afternoon of boring repose on Lake Zurich, I went to the train station, bought a ticket for that night's *wagon-lit*, and woke up next morning in Rome.

Rome was Babel, but very much alive. I decoded a subway map, *schlepped* my suitcase to the American Express office, and chatted one of the clerks into telling me where he would stay if he were visiting Rome. That's how I found my way to a little hotel on Campo de' Fiori, between Piazza Navona and the Farnese, and to a room on the seventh floor, no elevator.

The clean sweet tiny hopelessly expensive room made me smile when I saw it and feel, unaccountably, that I had been "brought" there. When I stepped through the door onto a double-decked terrace, I was stunned by the sudden answer to my question, by the revealed truth of my uncanny intuition. The terrace commanded the most astounding 360-degree view: domes, dozens of domes, spherical, conical, even spiral; at eye-level, it seemed; nearby, distant, a heavenly city of them: domes of churches whose names are little poems in English and arpeggios in Italian: *Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza*, *Sant'Andrea della Valle*, Saint Charles at the Four Fountains, the Trinity of the Pilgrims, and sternly presiding away across the Tiber, *San Pietro in Vaticano*.

Beneath the city of domes, Rome in August was so hot that even the Romans were griping, as I was; it was noisy and gritty, and the police had attitudes like teen-agers on steroids. But if someone else, particularly a non-Italian, had likewise complained, I would have defended the city, which I was willing to for its passion.

The cheerful life of the *piazze*, by day, but especially by night, highlighted my loneliness, which crept into the pictures I took. No postcard "shots," this vacation, no: rather I took moody black-and-white nocturnes of the Tiber and the Trastevere. I qualified the rapturous poses of the angels of the Passion on Ponte Sant'Angelo by foregrounding them with the Ethiopian peddlers selling cheap wares at their feet; I recorded the juxtaposing of a provocative poster for the *Acqua Dance* in Ostia (beer, swimming, disco) with the crumbling sacred fresco of another century; then took a close-up of a winged, gap-toothed skull, crowned with laurels, carved on a portal of the Via Giulia.

Saint Peter's left me cold. My last visit there, a college student, an idealistic apostate, I nonetheless had felt a romantic awe in the goal of centuries of pilgrims. Now, half a lifetime later, a practicing Catholic Christian, I was ashamed of the wealth of the Vatican palaces. The basilica struck me as an artistic failure, so determined to impress you with its size, it seems smaller than it really is, the brilliance of Michelangelo and Bernini sabotaged by the vulgar political agenda of aggrandizement. Certain papal tombs provoked my laughter with their pharaonic pretensions.

One night I finally rebelled against the solitude and rode the metro to the Protestant cemetery—and it was not to visit Keats's grave. No, I was looking for a place I'd heard of where I was sure the noise would kill my silence. But the deserted streets, the scene of a car-full of men bargaining with a prostitute by the cemetery wall, disheartened me, made me admit what I already knew, that I would not find whatever I was seeking in the noise. So I returned to my terrace, my city of domes, the midnight music of Campo de' Fiori, my one-sided dialogues with the hazy stars. *What*, I heard myself saying aloud, do you want with *me*?

On the morning of the nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, I found myself gazing up into one of the domes whose shell I could see from my terrace, an artificial heaven, appropriating its resplendence from the excluded Roman sky: Sant'Agnese in Piazza Navona. A pilgrim in spite of myself, restless, destination undetermined, I was strangely at peace in this church, as I was in its square, where art has played as carelessly as Wisdom before the throne of God.

"Mass in English," the sign had read. A choir of Nigerian nuns was singing, as if giving voice to the carved music of the stone angels; soon a woman from Long Island would read from First Kings: He went a day's journey into the desert until he came to a broom tree and sat...then an angel touched him and ordered him..."*'Get up and eat, else the journey will be too long for you!' He got up, ate and drank; then strengthened by that food, he walked forty days and forty nights to the mountain of God....*"

The journey and the music continued that night in Piazza Navona, where a crowd of thirty students danced a country dance in a long line, to an Italian folk tune that they were singing *a cappella*, as if the merry square itself provoked—no, re-

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quired—such behavior. Next night, I heard an organ concert in Sant'Ignazio, my favorite of the big Baroque churches, where the nave's ceiling explodes in a funny, sublime vision of heaven wedding the continents of the earth. Admission was free, a gesture whose generosity was not lost on me: how much, with the price of European utilities, did it cost the church to burn those constellations of chandeliers in the apse and the candelabra held by the angels of the transepts? To hear Bach and Charles Ives in such a setting offered some proof of Walter Pater's subversive theory that all the arts aspire to the condition of music.

Next day I boarded the train for Zurich. It would be a long ride, but restful, with the train's taking over the work of travel and the scenery distracting me from my loneliness. As we rolled out of the station someone slid back the glass door of the compartment where I was sitting by myself, and asked if one of the vacant seats were taken. It was someone I had noticed on the platform (*no wedding ring, but probably too young for me*), whose gaze now, I could feel, kept returning from the window to my face. Inevitably, we exchanged a mutually embarrassed greeting, and before I knew it, we were engaged in the most absurd and delightful flirtation, enhanced, if not made possible, by means of a bilingual dictionary. In these tender eyes and in this quiet voice, I felt the city of Rome, and perhaps even my divine lover, finally break the silence: *Sei simpatico. M'hai capito*? "You are appealing. Do you understand me?" We had lunch together in the dining car, where I could not overlook another traveler at the next table, eating alone—*poor fellow*, I thought. A reluctant departure was made at Milan, and I continued alone on the train into the Alps.

Madeleine and I reviewed my Roman photographs in a New Haven restaurant one evening, laughing at their Byronic gloom. Elisabeth had since returned to Zurich; Madeleine, thankful for her presence during a critical time of Jenny's illness, was a single parent again. By now she'd had the chance to ponder some perplexing movements in her spiritual life: she had been weeping in prayer, for no reason it seemed, all summer, long before she left for Zurich and found Jenny so disturbed. She believed that she had been grieving for her daughter even then, before her reason confirmed her unknown fears about the girl's well-being. In the bigger scheme of things, she conjectured, her botched vacation had been necessary for her to bring Jenny home, which was God's careful desire, or "will"; in our bungling compliance with this desire, all our botched—or "sacrificed"—vacations had opened the door to baffling grace.

Jennifer returned to school, with a reduced course load and weekly therapy, which is just what I might have suggested if I were her dean. But Madeleine received a call from the college one night a week into term; she drove to Maine to bring Jenny home again. The prognosis now, after a stay in the hospital, is hopeful: she is planning to resume classes in July. But recovery takes longer than we would like. As Madeleine keeps caring for her daughter, we, her friends, will try to care for Madeleine.

Meanwhile, the day I finished the first draft of this essay, I received a card from Lago di Garda near Milan. "Remember," it begins, "the train from Rome?" □

SCREEN

ALIENATED

RIPLEY'S BELIEVE IT OR NOT

There's a sick but potent subtext roiling through all three of the *Alien* movies. The first one, *Alien,* contained a nightmarish image of impregnation and birth. The monster, as a hostless embryo, lodged itself inside the body of a crewman of an intergalactic tanker, then tore itself out of the poor fellow's chest upon reaching maturation. In the second installment, *Aliens*, the tanker's sole survivor, intrepid Ripley, took a little girl, also a sole survivor (of a space colony destroyed by the monsters), under her wing and, while battling to protect the orphan, destroyed a cluster of alien nestlings. Of course, the enraged progenitrix soon confronted Ripley and the two females battled to the death with the adopting parent blowing the birth mother to blazes. Now in *Alien*^{3}, the dominating motifs seem to be surrogate motherhood and abortion. Surrogate motherhood as ultimate horror and abortion as ultimate salvation. This is the queasiest *Alien* of the trilogy but, I must admit, it is also the most powerful.

Riding home in suspended animation from the carnage of *Aliens*, Ripley's body is used by a stowaway monster as the carrier of a baby alien, and the choices confronting our heroine become clear: she can wait on the penal colony planet where she has crash-landed for her corporation bosses to rescue her, or she can kill herself. She knows from her experiences in *Aliens* that the corporation people are power mad and want possesion of a living alien only to use it as a killing machine (though on whom isn't clear since none of the *Alien* movies has briefed us on the geopolitics of the future). Therefore, Ripley chooses suicide. But she cannot end her own life until she and the colony's prisoners put an end to the mother alien that implanted the fetus. So, as in all the *Alien* films, we are here watching the doomed fight the monstrous. These films have been called haunted-house-in-outer-space movies and so they are, but they also partake of the *Lost Patrol* syndrome: we are to watch the members of a group die one by one and the pleasure we're supposed to get comes from watching how each victim goes to his or her Maker: the garishness of each death, the gallantry or abjectness of each victim are what count.

But there is something about this *Alien*^{3} that gives it a gravity, an emotional tug that the other two lacked. I think Malcolm Johnson put his finger on this difference in his review for the *Hartford Courant* when he noted the resemblance of Sigourney Weaver as Ripley to Falconetti, the impersonator of Joan in Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc*. It's not just a matter of shaved heads (Ripley gets hers cropped for lice). Falconetti's

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countenance was mournful and tender; Weaver's is tough and guarded. But both faces express the suffering and determination of cross bearers. They are women who have killed and will die for the future of the human race.

There's a strong and gratifying feeling of impersonality in this horror movie that keeps it (just barely) from being schlock. The moviemakers—director David Fincher and scriptwriters Walter Hill and David Giler—know that when you deprive an audience of false hopes for the hero, that when you show that he or she must die for some great goal to be realized and that, in a sense, we must root for them to die, you may sadden your audience but you won't depress them.

Watching the first *Alien*, I and perhaps many others felt that we were watching the first horror movie that decisively crossed the line that separates enjoyable fright from relished sadism. Countless fictional innocents have died in countless horror movies but *Alien* may have been the first one to concentrate so exclusively not on startling sights and violence but on the sweaty, eye-popping reactions of the victims as they were hunted down. Several close-ups, particularly the ones of Veronica Cartwright, were downright sadistic in that the director, Ridley Scott, seemed to be savoring the suffering of people who knew they were going to die. This was hardly a pleasurable viewing experience. If *Aliens* was more palatable, it was because its director, James Cameron, mounted it as a conventional war movie in an unconventional setting. The soldiers who fought alongside Ripley arrived expecting combat though they got more than they bargained for. The battle and death scenes were wrenching but not pornographic.

Alien^3 moves beyond sadism, beyond gallantry in combat, toward a gleeful nihilism. The convicts who help Ripley battle this last monster are realizing themselves even as they're slaughtered. These guys, murderers and rapists all, have *born to lose* tattooed, figuratively speaking, across their plug-ugly faces. They're not awaiting or enduring their dooms; they're racing toward them with a hellish joy. When one criminal, with the monster snapping at his heels, cries out, "This thing is really pissed off!" we can hear the joy of defiance in his voice as well as the terror. And the camera, racing down corridors with pursuers and pursued, makes us share the awful exhilaration of the chase. (Though I must also note that the few clear glimpses we get of the monster reveal it to be no more frightening than Barney the Dinosaur.)

Ripley isn't exhilarated but she knows exactly what she's doing and she's too strong to ever come across as a mere victim. I'm not subtracting an iota of suspense from your viewing if I reveal that Ripley does indeed die at the end, because it's clear from the start of this movie (when she wakes from hypersleep to discover that her soldier-lover and adopted child from *Aliens* have been killed) that Ripley is doomed and that some portion of her spirit has already acknowledged that doom. The real question that is posed by the last half of *Alien*^{3} is not whether Ripley will die or not but will she die in a manner that is worthy of all the horrors that have been pursuing her through this gruesome trilogy?

Our heroine comes through in style. "Must it be this way? Yes, it must be this way," were the words that went through my mind as Ripley launched herself and the whole descent of monsters inside of her into a back flip into hell. *Alien*^{3} is a shocker but not a downer. Its makers have the courage of their ulcerated convictions.

RICHARD ALLEVA

MEDIA

FRANK & CELESTE & DAN

THE UNTHINKABLE 'MURPHY BROWN'

"I told them I'd do a piece about 'Murphy Brown' and the Dan Quayle silliness," I said to my wife as I hung up the phone.

"Oh, good!" Celeste said. "I think you should. And I've got some ideas about that whole thing, too—I mean, if you think you'd like to use any of them."

"Well, sure," I said. We'd been in London mourning my fiftieth birthday in May when Murphy gave birth to her single-parent kid and the Man-A-Heartbeat-From-The-Presidency declared that it was things like *that* that were causing our moral deterioration and riots in Los Angeles. The coverage in the *Guardian*, predictably, had treated the flap as yet another amusing indi-

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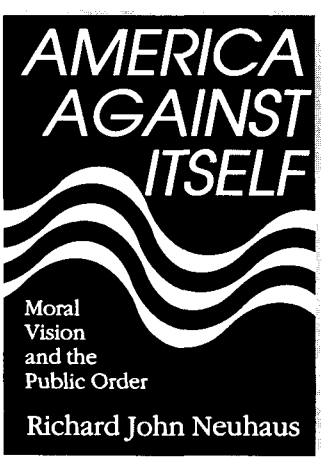

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cation that the ex-colonials were still not quite ready for full enfranchisement and, I have to tell you, from the viewpoint of British politics it's hard to fight that. It was only when we got back that we realized how big a thing *l'affaire Brown* was in this kinder gentler nation, where sitcoms and Gulf Wars are sold—for several thousands of dollars per advertising minute—at the same going rate and where politicians count their ratings as carefully as hookers their nightly take. And where—V.P. Dan gets the honor for this breakthrough—finally the politicians become such psychic prisoners of their media representation that they can't, even, any more seem to be able to tell the difference between life and life on the Tube. Los Angeles burns and what do Dan and George Herbert Walker Bush sweat their shirts about? "Murphy Brown"?

But I'm getting ahead of myself.

"Sure," I told Celeste. "Any ideas you have I'd..."

"For instance," she said. "You'll notice that Quayle and his people are all so passionately prolife, but that when Murphy decides to have her baby and *not* have an abortion, they think that's terrible too. Even Bush—who ought to be smarter in an election year—couldn't dissociate himself from Quayle's contradiction."

"Well, yeah," I said. "Everybody's been saying that..."

"No," she said. "You don't get it. What are the most successful sitcoms since the fifties? 'My Little Margie.' 'Bachelor Father.' 'The Courtship of Eddie's Father.' 'A Family Affair.' 'My Three Sons.' And what do they all have in common? Kids being raised by a male figure with the mother either dead or absent. *Because the mother's not really important after she gives birth.* And the housework in those series is taken care of by a butler or an older guy like Sebastian Cabot in 'Family Affair'—or by a woman who's not sexually significant for 'Dad,' like the Oriental widow in 'Eddie's Father.' 'Murphy Brown' scares the hell out of Danny boy and his pals because it says that women give birth and men can't, and that women have a right to be proud of that genetic advantage—or should I say, that genetic superiority?"

I had another cup of coffee. "Well, yeah," I said, "but what about..."

"What about 'The Brady Bunch' and 'Eight Is Enough' and 'The Dick Van Dyke Show?"' she said. "Different shuffle, same game. In each of those the woman's important only because she's *given* birth, not because she has anything to do with the real *raising* of the kids, which any fool knows is the opposite of the real world. Take 'The Brady Bunch'..."

"Rumor has it that's Thomas Pynchon's favorite TV show," I put in wisely.

"Mm. The mother in the show is 'bringing up three lovely daughters,' right? But what fulfills her life? The daughters? Nope. Marrying Mike Brady with his three sons and relaxing into the anonymity of *Hausfrau*."

"And *Hausfrau* is, already, a bad thing?" I asked, lighting my first cigarette of the day and thinking, Gotcha!

"You know better than that," she said, looking disappointed. "It's a bad thing—*anything* is a bad thing—if you do it because you're brainwashed into thinking you have to do it: housewife, priest, general. Like you always say, the choice is everything. 'Who cleans a privy in God's name'..."

"'Dignifies himself and the act thereby,'" I finished. "Okay. So the American sitcom, you're telling me, is about the fact that women are unreliable and unnecessary except as...unh..."

"Try 'breeders,'" she said.

"Check. But then you've got, before Murphy Brown, other really independent women on TV, like..."

"Like 'That Girl' and 'The Mary Tyler Moore Show'? Come on. They were both great shows, but what was the message? Marlo Thomas in 'That Girl' could have her fling in New York as a model, but only on the assumption that sooner or later she'd marry her boyfriend Donald. And Mary could be a career woman as long as she stayed in that apartment—a girls' dorm, really—and remained in awe of Lou Grant. How many times did you hear 'Oh, Donald!' or 'Oh, Mister Grant!' on those shows? No. Murphy is the first woman in a sitcom to function fully professionally and sexually, and not to be made to pay a price for it. And *that's* what scares the Quayles: it goes way deeper than abortion or single-parenting. Look how mad people got at Hillary Clinton for being a sassy, efficient lawyer and a loyal wife and mother. And look how Marilyn Quayle, another sassy, efficient lawyer, has put her career on hold to stand by her man. One of them pays for being Murphy and the other one pays for not being Murphy. Heads you go off to work, tails I bake cookies."

"The flip side of your horror film idea," I said. Celeste has this idea—which is right—that horror films like *Poltergeist*, *The Shining*, or the *Nightmare on Elm Street* series, involve families where the father is either absent or ineffectual, thus leaving the household open to the influence of an "uncontrolled" mother and therefore to the eruption of the irrational.

"Yes!" she said. "What's the Great Sacred Cow of all sitcoms?"

"'I Love Lucy,'" I answered. We both hate "I Love Lucy."

"And what is the source of the joke in episode after episode? Lucy, on her own, has done something—screwed up—and she's *terrified* that Ricky will find out. And why? It's never too far from the surface: *because he might beat the hell out of her.* And the comedy justifies that: the woman on her own *will* screw up, unless the man retains firm control. So you see why Murphy Brown's choice is so threatening? She's not afraid: she's not afraid to be herself and to give life and to function in the real world, and for her, being that kind of woman is not just within inches of tipping over into a horror film. She has her kid, who cares if the father's not there, and it's all okay. It's *okay*."

"You make it sound revolutionary," I said, lighting my third cigarette.

"I don't," she said. "Not since Alice Cramden in 'The Honeymooners'—God bless Jackie Gleason—has there been a woman in a sitcom who can exist apart from 'her man'—that's to say, who can live with 'her man' as an equal person. And the people who are scared by that are the people I think you and I should be scared *of*.

"Well, anyway, honey," she smiled, "that's just what I think. I'm going to work in the garden. Why don't you have some more coffee and write your piece?"

And "Unh—yeah," I said.

FRANK McCONNELL

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A spirituality for the end-time

ERNEST W. RANLY

In many parts of Peru, the situation is now so desperate that we who live here describe it as "total violence." The center no longer holds. Thus, the Peruvian bishops recently spoke openly about the presence of the "Evil One." The realization grows that the present struggle here is against more than just the powers of this world.

In *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order*, the Reverend Robert Schreiter, professor of historical and doctrinal studies at Chicago's Catholic Theological Union, writes with logic, economy, and the world view of an ecumenical Christian missionary. More importantly, he writes with the heart and soul of a fellow-suffering Christian. I am grateful to him (and to God) that someone so firm and confident in his academic and professional credentials has the uncanny ability to touch us all so deeply, particularly those of us in Peru. We need not only solidarity in prayers from family and friends but hearty theological substance for our daily spirituality.

In the first chapter, "The Context of Reconciliation," Schreiter describes the human situation as intrinsically one of conflict. He gives a masterly overview of the new world order. Violence between ethnic groups in what were the Soviet republics leaves us aghast at the depth and complexity of the problem of reconciliation; the Middle East remains in constant tension; racial and sexual discriminations abound. This is more than Marxist economic "class conflict"; the flaw in the human situation is much deeper and endemic. The root of the problem is sin.

Schreiter seeks to understand this situation by analyzing our culture and its narratives. As he did previously in his landmark work *Constructing Local Theologies* (Orbis), he applies linguistic semiotics as an instrument of social analysis. He argues, for example, that a culture defines and defends itself by an interlocking web of stories. Such narratives are not only "past history" but the very stuff of a living, creative society. Each member of society becomes a self as he or she develops a personal story consonant with larger social narratives. In the United States, for example, children learn that even a log-splitter can become president, with the result that American children have a sense of unlimited opportunities. Stories are told so that a particular type of society may survive and endure.

I have a number of questions for Schreiter of a metaphysical nature: about the ultimate reality of the human person, about death, about immortality—questions which we in Peru take very seriously, since our lives are being threatened. But his application of linguistic semiotics to the question of violence proves illuminating. For, as he aptly notes, violence is "the narrative of the lie." Its purpose is to destroy the individual's sense of self and a society's self-confidence.

Here he comments on Peru's *Sendero Luminoso*, the Shining Path, and its "wanton executions." The killings and assassinations by *Sendero* are carefully selective: a mayor in a small town, a leader of mothers' clubs which operate neighborhood soup kitchens, several engineers working among the poor. Mao instructs: "Kill one, terrify thousands."

The bombings and destruction of the roads, bridges, high tension lines are equally well planned; not necessarily in the way they cripple the economy, but in their social/political significance. To black out the capital city of Lima at the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve is an effective blow against our entire sense of security and identity, and ultimately of our future. Such *Sendero* tactics not only bring about traumatic breakdowns for individuals, but more devastating, they undermine a society's narrative infrastructure. As Schreiter writes, "violence tries to destroy the narratives that sustain people's identities and substitute narratives of its own." (According to *Sendero*, out of chaos and the ruins of the old society, the new social order is to arise like the phoenix from its ashes.) Here Schreiter refers to Satan as "the one who accuses falsely" and to *Diabolos* as "the Confuser."

It is precisely at this point that one must begin "the quest of a redeeming narrative" to help one recover one's own self: a new hope and confidence to rebuild family, community, and society. The Christian story, as told in Romans and 2 Corinthians, is about the reconciling work of God

Book discussed in this essay

Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order. *Robert Schreiter, Orbis, $10.95, 96 pp.*

ERNEST W. RANLY, C.PP.S., *is currently on assignment as a missionary in the mountains of Peru.*

CONTEST

The Critic magazine is sponsoring a Short Story Contest. Entries must be original and previously unpublished. The winner receives a $1,000 prize and publication in The Critic, a journal of American Catholic culture and arts. Deadline: September 15, 1992. For details send SASE to: Editor, Short Story Contest, Dept. C., Thomas More Association, 205 W. Monroe, 6th Floor, Chicago, IL 60606.

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achieved in the blood and cross of Christ. Schreiter concisely outlines some of the Christological, ecclesiastical, and cosmic aspects of the divine reconciliation. In every case, this reconciliation is a free, unmerited gift from God.

In recent years, social action groups in the Peruvian church have avoided using the term reconciliation because conservative movements in Latin America have attempted to appropriate the word. "Theology of reconciliation" has been proposed as a corrective and a criticism of the "theologies of liberation." Schreiter addresses this situation and states emphatically that there is no reconciliation without liberation, for liberation is a necessary prior condition for reconciliation. The major achievement of this small work is Schreiter's refusal to surrender the term "reconciliation" to those who tend to trivialize and politicize its profound Christian message. Without undue polemics, but with magisterial authority, he restores reconciliation as a major theme of soteriology and ministry.

While reconciliation comes about only through the free grace of God, in a human manner of speaking only the victims of violence can be instruments of reconciliation. Only they can rightfully speak of and initiate the process that leads to reconciliation. Oppressors cannot simply declare the end of oppression and expect that reconciliation will automatically follow. Their repentance and conversion are not the same thing as reconciliation. For only when the victims are open to the mysterious workings of God's power can genuine reconciliation occur. This is the very real eschatological joy and peace that Stanley Hauerwas describes in *The Peaceable Kingdom* (University of Notre Dame Press). It occurs only at deeply transcendental levels, for both the human person and within human community.

This is the keystone in Schreiter's argument, or to put it more exactly, this is the divine mystery of reconciliation. Therefore, neither the church nor people who represent the church may presume to be instruments of reconciliation. They must earn that right, by intimately sharing solidarity with the victims so that they become identified in heart, voice, and soul with the victims. Schreiter wisely cites the case of the Chilean church under Cardinal Raul Henriquez Silva as an instance where the church itself earned the right to be a minister of reconciliation.

We in Peru are in the crucible of suffering, hesitation, and doubt. The violence here is still so active that it is premature to even talk about reconciliation. The Peruvian church is unable to take a unified prophetic stance in the face of the complexity and the ambiguity of the violence. But at the grassroots level, many priests, religious, and laity have made their commitment to stay with our suffering people. Five church people have been killed deliberately. The price of solidarity and victimhood—of reconciliation—is indeed very high.

Schreiter writes that the ministry of reconciliation is more a spirituality than a strategy or a "well-managed therapy process." It entails the attitude of listening and waiting, of patient, silent suffering. In Peru, we agree. Learning how to wait is a key factor in what he calls *orthopathema*, "the right way to suffer." Attention and compassion will not hurry the grieving process; they will not distort or diminish the detailed, painful memories of the victims. Reconciliation is a blessed, healing process, but, how slow and painful it is!

Among the church's resources for reconciliation, Schreiter lists rituals, public penances, the Eucharist, and the reshaping of some of the gospel stories. In many retreat-workshops we have given in Peru on the spirituality of Christian nonviolence, we have used these tools and others. The participants tell their stories of suffering by forming a "dry cross" on the floor in front of the altar with thorns, brambles, and dead leaves. People come up, one by one, and add a prickly branch to the cross: "In memory of a young lad killed by the investigative police"; "for Sister Augustina"; "for the mother president of our mothers' clubs"; and so on. That awful cross will lie there for several days. People kneel by it and weep over their memories and sorrows.

We return to the Hebrew Scriptures with great enthusiasm. Job, the Prophets, the Psalms, Lamentations: they all take on new life and meaning. They illustrate the right way of suffering. Job never lost his humanity in confrontation with the Lord, never distorted the memory of who he was and what he had done. We return to the so-called "cursing psalms" and find their cruel, harsh sayings right on target. They are inspired prayers. Lines from Jeremiah are literally true in parts of Peru: corpses in the country, dead bodies in the cities. One of our favorite readings is from Joel, begging for repentance but always assuring the people that the Lord is compassionate and merciful. None of the scriptural readings ends in despair or hopelessness. The bottom line is always God's mercy and fidelity.

Nor do we leave the cross of thorns lying there. At some point, perhaps after the Communion of the closing liturgy, everyone is invited to bring in fresh greens and flowers, and while expressing signs of hope—"in the youth," "in the courage of the mothers," "in the smile of a child"—the cross is covered with color and life, like the jeweled crosses of antiquity. It becomes the Tree of Life, the Cross of Victory, a banner of hope.

After the Mass we stand around, admiring the spontaneous beauty of the cross of flowers, embracing one another with tears of hope and renewed joy to go back to our people. Likewise, reading and rereading Schreiter's book has been a real grace for me. □

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Resetting the liberal compass

LIBERAL PURPOSES
William A. Galston
Cambridge University Press, $16.95, 354 pp.

R. Bruce Douglass

It's a curiously contradictory double life liberalism leads these days. For there is a sense, of course, in which it is riding high. Considered as one of the great "isms" of our time, it dominates the way Americans tend to think about matters of public concern. And the hold it has on the public mind appears to be growing all the time. The prestige it enjoys in the wider world, moreover, is enormous. It is doing so well, in fact, that it is not at all hard to understand why some would have us believe the moment has come to declare it the clear winner in the great ideological competition of the age.

But there is another sense in which just the opposite is the case. Considered as the basis of a partisan position in our national electoral politics (the kind of thing represented by the progressive wing of the Democratic party), it is anything but a success. Liberalism in *this* sense is in crisis, and has been for some time. And for all of the difficulties in which the other side increasingly finds itself, there is no end of the crisis in sight. Especially in national electoral politics, the fortunes of liberals have fallen so low, in fact, that their candidates are tempted to mask the fact. For fear of being tarred with the "L" word, they shy away from talking about principles.

How could such a thing happen? How in a country where liberalism enjoys such wide appeal as a public philosophy could the liberal cause fall into such disrepute that its partisans have to apologize for the fact? And if one is a liberal oneself, the obvious next question is whether anything can be done about it. William Galston, as one who clearly approaches the subject with such a partisan interest, believes he has the answer to both questions. And in *Liberal Purposes*, a book drawing upon both his considerable scholarly expertise as a political theorist and the experience he has had as an activist in the national Democratic party, he goes a long way toward proving the point.

The thing in particular that makes what he has to say distinctive is the way he links the crisis into which the liberal cause has fallen in American electoral politics to recent trends in moral and political philosophy. For he is not inclined to place much stock in the notion that the problem liberals now face is just a matter of packaging. He's convinced it goes much deeper than that. It's the message itself that is at fault—at the most fundamental level. And what he then goes on to argue is that the root of the problem is a particular *interpretation* of the liberal project that has caught on among activists and academics alike.

The heart of this view, in turn, is a certain conception of how we should deal with the challenge posed in our public life by the fact of our moral and religious pluralism. And its central tenet is the idea that what we should be aiming for, as much as possible, is a neutral state—a proposition Galston thinks voters are perfectly justified in treating with suspicion. For as a practical matter it is something that can't possibly be realized, and attempts to do so only end up making it harder to take the steps elementary moral intuition dictates must be taken if freedom is not to become a recipe for social disintegration.

There is no way, he says, that a state which is at all active can in fact be neutral among the various alternative conceptions of life's meaning and purpose now available to us. It is bound to be partisan; some ways of life will be favored and others won't. That's what policymaking is all about. And people sense that—which is why they can't help but mistrust anyone who claims to think otherwise. Especially not, moreover, when in the next breath the same people turn out, as they so often do, to be partisans in some of the most hotly debated moral controversies of our time. And when on top of this they then go on to place themselves in principled opposition to attempts to preserve institutions like the two-parent family that are essential for the realization of the virtues on which free societies depend for their viability, they almost ask to be dismissed. They could hardly do a better job of discrediting themselves if they deliberately set out to do so.

Fortunately, however, Galston assures us, none of this is necessary. For no matter how appealing this kind of thing may be to *some* liberals, it is by no means essential to liberalism as such. In fact, if anything, it is an aberration. For in the past, he insists, most liberals have not thought this way at all. They have been frankly partisan. Whether it be Locke or Kant or Mill, they have made no bones about the fact that they were dedicated to promoting a particular way of life. Nor have they been at all hesitant, either, to see to it that practices they knew to be necessary to realize that way of life were actively promoted. They were under no illusions about the fact that people did not just automatically turn out the way they had in mind. Nor have they had any compunctions, either, about relying on institutions inherited from the past when it suited their purpose.

The same combination of explicit partisanship and practical realism is what Galston believes contemporary liberals should be striving for. And there is no good theoretical reason, he believes, why they cannot do so and at the same time honor the commitment they have to respecting

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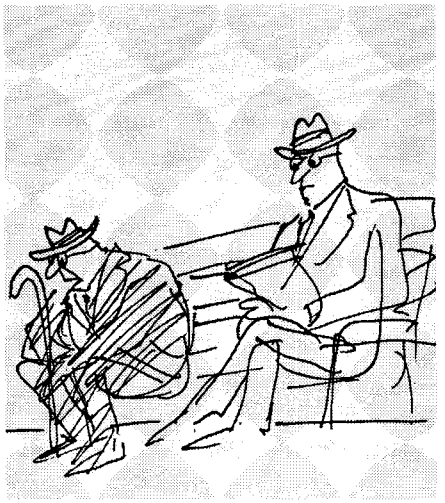
people's right to live their lives as they choose. As long as one is not doctrinaire about the latter, so that it ends up being the *only* thing that matters, there is no good reason, he says, why the two cannot be reconciled. And the way to do it is to combine a broadly inclusive conception of the good that liberals seek with what he characterizes as a "functional traditionalism" in determining the means to bring it about.

As long as the vision of life's purpose that guides the liberal project is not construed narrowly, so that it ends up excluding much of what people these days (in all of their variety) in fact understand their striving to be for, acknowledging it explicitly will serve only, says Galston, to clarify what it is that all along has made liberalism so appealing—namely, the fact that it provides a way of combining the aspiration for personal growth and development with a respect for the diversity of human beings. And if this were to be done in a way that also involved a willingness to honor the accumulated wisdom reflected in such institutions as the family in making sense of how people are to be empowered to attain such a vision, the result would have even more the feel of inclusion about it. Instead of being forced to choose *between* liberal principles and their inherited moral understandings, people would be able to treat them as complementary. Add to this, moreover, the fact that this is something that almost certainly can be done (Galston is convinced) without ever taking a position on the *intrinsic* merits of the practices in question, and it is hard to see, he says, why anyone but the most doctrinaire proponent of the politics of "difference" would have reason to object.

Surely, moreover, he is right about much of this, which is why the book makes as provocative reading as it does. To this reader, at least, it has the ring of common sense about it, and as such, comes as a much-needed breath of fresh air. It is the seminar-room equivalent of the sort of straight talk voters seem to be hungering for these days. And the fact that Galston is prepared to be as adventuresome as he is in advancing a solution to the problem he identifies only enhances the value of what he says.

This does *not* mean, however, that I am



"Actually I'm quite rare. A traditionalist without a tradition."

optimistic that it will have anything like the desired effect. For in dealing with a subject as ideologically charged as this one, it is one thing, of course, to make an argument that makes sense and quite another to appeal successfully to the minds that need to be changed. And if anything is evident about liberalism today in this country, it is that its development is being driven by forces that are in no mood to think along Galston's lines. There have been times in the history of liberalism in this country when it has indeed been able to function as a unifying force—largely because of what liberals themselves have understood their mission to be. But this is not one of those times. We are living in a moment when liberalism functions primarily as a vehicle for very particular partisan causes whose proponents see themselves engaged in what amounts to a cultural war. And the last thing to which they are likely to be receptive is the suggestion that they need to be more open to the views of those with whom they see themselves doing battle.

Especially not, moreover, in the absence of the sort of theoretical argument it would take to justify the rethinking of basic issues of principle this would require of them. And this is where I cannot help but find fault with the book. For even though it does an excellent job of making what I would characterize as a political case for recasting the liberal project along the lines Galston has in mind, it simply does not address adequately the more fundamental theoretical issues it raises. In spite of the fact that it is clearly the work of a gifted theoretical mind, it ends up having a curiously atheoretical quality about it. For all too often, when the argument he is making raises a difficult theoretical issue, Galston is prepared to *stipulate* a position rather than develop a sustained case on its behalf.

The obvious question, to take a sensitive example, when he proposes that liberals need to show more respect for the wisdom embodied in inherited beliefs and practices is *why* this is so. One can see why for reasons of political expediency it might make sense, but there still remains the issue of principle. And this is a matter which, to put it mildly, can hardly be neglected. Not when the legitimacy of inherited beliefs and practices is just what is at issue in so many of the battles in which liberals now find themselves engaged. Especially is this the case, moreover, when for many liberals criticism of established traditions is *just what the liberal project is all about.*

But as far as I can see, this is something about which the book has next to nothing to say. It is obvious Galston thinks the tendency liberals have to look with suspicion on familiar customs is in principle not well advised. But the reasons he has are not at all well developed. So the reader is left on his own at just the point when the argument becomes theoretically interesting. For this reason, I find it hard to imagine, in turn, that many minds are going to be changed by *Liberal Purposes.* It is the kind of work that will appeal to those already predisposed to go along with it. But it will not be the occasion for much soul-searching on the part of those who are not. The thing in particular it will not do, moreover, is convince such people that there is in fact an alternative available that might be preferable to the view they currently hold.

This is a shame. For if there is anything Galston is right about, it is that the liberal project as now conceived is self-defeating. It is badly in need of reconstruction, and of just the sort he has in mind. Few people who are writing today about such matters, moreover, are better equipped to bring it about. But this particular effort won't suffice, and thus I hope, it will not be Galston's last word on the subject. □

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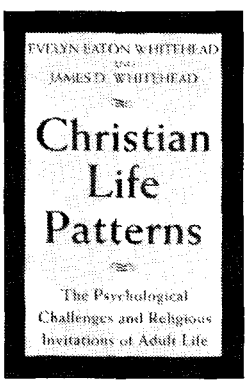

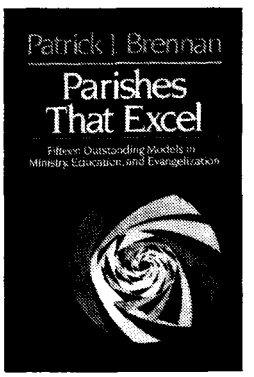

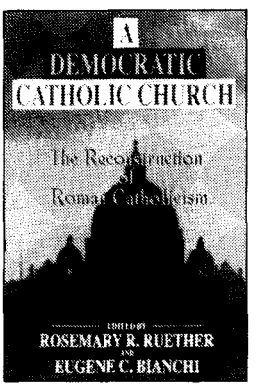

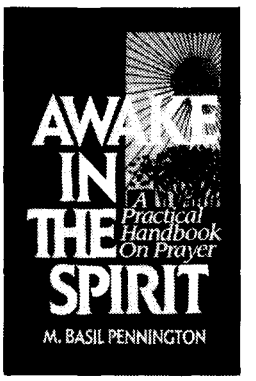

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WHAT COLUMBUS COULDN'T SEE

AMERICA IN 1492
Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., Editor
Alfred A. Knopf, $35, 477 pp.

Bette S. Weidman

While Columbus's landfall in the Caribbean may be an occasion for rueful remembrance, this substantial book and the information it represents are cause for celebration. A full account of the peoples of the Americas before European colonization, the volume is written by anthropologists and historians who have themselves done primary research in the regions and topics they survey; fifteen distinguished Native American and non-Native American writers have collaborated to produce a set of fourteen essays, accompanied by a notable introduction and afterword, that summarize the most up-to-date information and interpretation we have on the environments, economics, belief systems, languages, arts, sciences, social life, and politics of 75 million "Indians" estimated to have been living in the Americas in 1492. Together they have made an *anti-textbook*, the kind of fresh and unhurried discussion that only writers in full control of their subjects can undertake.

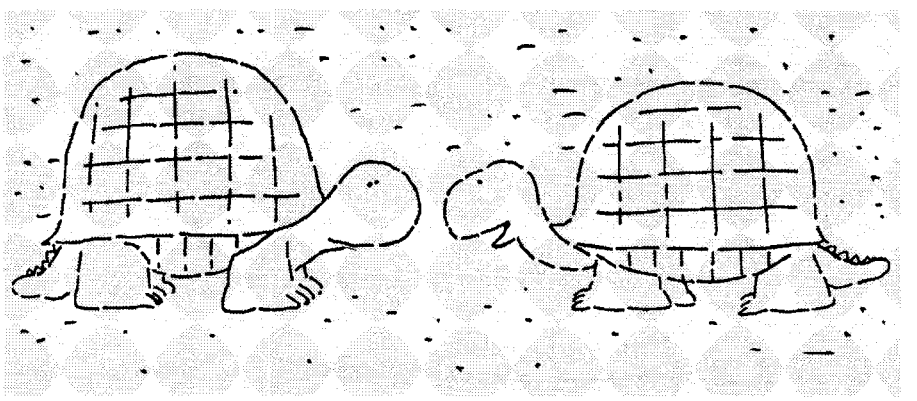
The book is immensely readable. With its range of bibliographic reference, both in the essays and in a special section of notes, and with its valuable collection of maps and illustrations, *America in 1492* is an indispensable starting point for any discussion of American history and culture.

The book is divided into two large sections. Part 1 begins with an essay by the poet and novelist, N. Scott Momaday, about the human meaning of Columbus's landfall, the deep ironies embedded in his mistaken sense of where he was. Momaday makes the great drama of Indian dispersal in the Americas personal and immediate by locating in it his own history as a Kiowa, balancing the scientific account of migration with the Kiowa origin myth. The first section of the book then unfolds in seven long essays on the peoples of each geographical region of North and South America, from Arctic to Andes, as they were at the end of the fifteenth century. Part 2 cross-cuts the regions to focus on aspects of American civilization-language, religion, social organization, political interaction, systems of knowledge, and arts—an astonishingly ambitious and original way of seeing the accomplishments of individual cultures as synchronic, culminating in one coherent, if richly diverse, picture.

The two-part form of the book is expressive of the irony, or juxtaposition without resolution, that Momaday underlines; not only did the Europeans of Columbus's era fail to understand the people they met, but their descendants continued to fail to appreciate the complexity and beauty of cultures they tried to destroy. The consequences of that failure are oppression, false stereotyping, and wasteful extinction of languages, values, and people. These painful realities of American politics are laid out by Alvin Josephy and Vine Deloria, in introduction and afterword. While no one can dispute their radical skepticism, especially on such matters as the ravaging of the environment and the outrage of Indian skeletal remains in museums, their sense of the continued polarization of Indian and "white" culture is somewhat contradicted by the weight of the book itself. While a reconciling third part is yet to be realized in our culture, the seeds of it are alive in the disinterested scholarship and passionate curiosity of the writers of this book, whether Indian or non-Indian.

Robin Ridington's beautifully written essay, "Northern Hunters," opens part 1 by describing the Arctic and Subartic hunting cultures which underlay hemisphere-wide patterns of interactions among humans, animals, and natural forces. He explains the technology that made extreme environments habitable and related spiritual and political attitudes. As most of these essayists do, Ridington reaches back to evidence of developments that preceded 1492 by millennia, such as the four-thousand-year-old Arctic small tool tradition. He also quotes Inuit song as Knud Rasmussen collected it in the 1920s and offers the story of a vision quest he himself collected in 1964, examples of enduring traditions that cast light back on the life of 1492. Two themes of the volume begin to emerge here: the peoples' expert understanding of their environments, however difficult, and their developed spiritual lives, evinced in artifacts and oral traditions.

While discussion of individual Indian groups are necessarily brief, the chapters devoted to geographical regions are long, full, and varied. The reader grasps the unity of pueblo culture and follows the edges of one group's territory into that of the next. As the Southwest terrain changes, for example, from country with sources of irri-



"Wouldn't you like to be a hundred again and know what you know now?"

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gation water to the drier Sonoran desert to the coastal islands of the Seris, we follow the natural adaptations of the people.

The first half of the book ends with three magnificent chapters on Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean; on the people of the South American lowlands; and on the Andean highlands. The prose flight over South American lowlands takes us on an unaccustomed journey around the coasts and through the Amazon basin, among peoples unfamiliar to me—the Mapuche, Jivaro, Warrau, Mundurucú, and Tupinamba. The North American reader is well reminded of the interest and complexity of these groups (the Mapuche presently number 1 million in Chile), of the Tehuelche who occupied Patagonia, and the Yaghan, who survived on the windy, stormy islands off the Southern Cone. In the chapter on the Andean world of Tawantinsuyu, there are fascinating illustrations drawn from the chronicle of Guaman Poma de Ayala, a Peruvian Indian who sent his record and call for reform, along with 400 drawings, to King Philip of Spain in 1613.

The second half of *America in 1492* begins with a discussion of the diversity of languages, about two thousand mutually unintelligible ones, spoken throughout the Americas at the time of Columbus. In a later chapter, there is room for a satisfyingly detailed description of the Bladder Festival of the Inuit, a celebration honoring the "inua" or spirits of the animals. Elsewhere, essayist Jay Miller provides a tour of the clan malocas (rectangular communal houses) of Tucanoans, built along the Vaupés River in the Amazon. These chapters surprise and delight with their evidence that specialization has not overcome these scholars, that perceptions of relatedness and the capacity for useful generalization have survived years of faithful fieldwork study. Perhaps the clue to this lies in the vitality of the material itself, which, like the Hopi story about Sunset Crater recently retold by Michael Lomatu'wayma, stimulates its hearer to ask questions that have no simple answers.

The cumulative excitement created by the book intensifies toward its end as the chapters perform increasingly sophisticated *tours de force*: Jay Miller describes gender relations in Native American societies, and emphasizes the importance of centerings on pivotal locales. Francis Jennings works away from centers to the peripheries of trade and tribute, noting a motif of the whole book—that Indian societies were "historical laboratories of cultural pluralism, with lessons for modern times." Clara Sue Kidwell brilliantly explains the mathematics, astronomy, architecture, weaving technology, metalwork, agriculture, and medicine of 1492. In the final chapter of the book, detailed attention is given to diversity of expression in the artsy stone-carving, arrow-shaping, body-painting, featherwork, basketry. Although there are extraordinary survivals, much verbal art, music, dance, and drama have been lost. With mixed resignation and expectation, Christian Feest concludes, "Only dead cultures are impervious to modification. So, ultimately, the vitality of living traditions compensates for the gloom of 1492."

Yet despite the lift of a wonderful book, perhaps there is reason for gloom in 1992. The week I was reading *America in 1492*, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* published a statistical survey of 13,000 Indian and Eskimo teen-agers, finding them "the most devastated group of adolescents in the U.S." With "twice the death rate of teens in any other racial group," the children are suffering: one out of five Indian girls and one out of eight boys have attempted suicide by the end of high school. What will our posterity say of America in 1992? Can we hope for an enduring and revitalized American Indian heritage without putting resources toward the health and well-being of our children? □

A DANGEROUS AGITATOR

THE PRISON NOTEBOOKS OF RICARDO FLORES MAGÓN
Douglas Day
Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, $21.95, 270 pp.

Ilan Stavans

The 1910 Mexican Revolution was followed by a religious aftershock: an anticlerical movement known as *La Cristiada* or the Cristero Rebellion that was tolerated, perhaps promoted by President Plutarco Elías Calles, to destroy the massive support of Catholicism among the poor, and to deepen the abyss between church and state. Perhaps the most remarkable piece of fiction about the period is Graham Greene's classic *The Power and the Glory*, about a disoriented, alcoholic priest in the southern state of Chiapas. The semitheological rebellion broke out in 1926, just four years after the death, in a Kansas cell, of Ricardo Flores Magón, a famous ideologue who helped shape antireligious sentiment in Mexico and whose anarchism was embraced at one point or another by many of the uneducated freedom-fighters in the revolution, among them Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa. A crusader for social justice, Flores Magón was seen by some supporters of the clergy as the Antichrist.

His story is told, with sparks of poetic freedom, by Douglas Day in his second novel, *The Prison Notebooks of Ricardo Flores Magón*. The award-winning biographer of Malcolm Lowry and the commonwealth professor of English and comparative literature at the University of Virginia, Day has been a devoted student of the Mexican Civil War as a case of futile armed struggle and of Mexican folklore. In this narrative, the two interests coalesce. In

REVIEWERS

R. BRUCE DOUGLASS *is associate professor in the department of government at Georgetown University.*

BETTE S. WEIDMAN *teaches at Queens College*

ILAN STAVANS, a *Mexican essayist, is writing a book on Hispanic culture in the U.S.*

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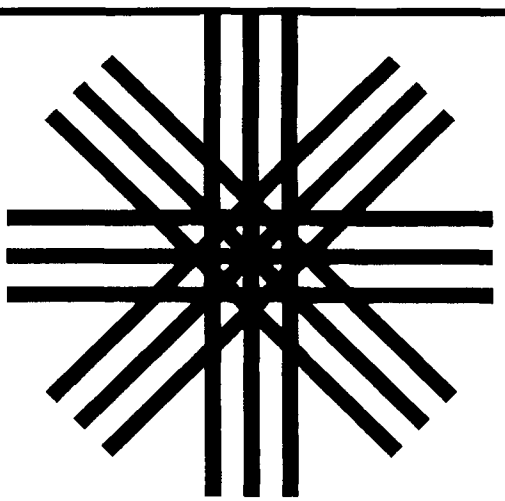
analyzing this controversial anarchist whose vision had a frightening echo, Day is able to penetrate the superficial layers of history and investigate the labyrinthine paths of Mexico's collective soul. The result is intriguing and ought to be seen as a sequel of sorts to Carlos Fuentes's *Old Gringo*, the 1985 novel about the mysterious death of Ambrose Bierce across the Rio Grande. Both are literary examinations from the viewpoint of a foreigner—that is, the *campesino* struggle as perceived from afar and in English.

Flores Magón, born in 1884, was a heavy-set and heavy-smoking journalist who made love to Emma Goldman and was a close friend of the celebrated satirist José Guadalupe Posada. While alive he was pretty much detested by everyone, but once dead the Mexican government elevated him to the stature of hero. Raised by a progressive father in a profoundly Catholic environment, his education proved to be explosive: in his eyes, the country's widespread poverty was a result of state corruption and the church's postponement of justice to the afterlife. Flores Magón was convinced that the thirty-five-year-long Porfirio Díaz dictatorship had to be overthrown if things were to change, and he thought Catholicism was the worst source of such evil. An avid reader of Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin, he promoted anarchic goals as a viable solution and published his feverish views in several magazines. A most important outlet was *Regeneración*, a journal sympathetic to liberals that became a symbol of resurgent anticlericalism and helped provide inspiration, years later, for a revolt of armed peasants shouting "*Viva Cristo Rey*!"—Long live Christ the King—in Jalisco, Michoacán, and other neighboring states in the south.

Flores Magón is allowed to tell his own story as death nears. He is in prison in the United States, where he was considered a "dangerous agitator" and was taken as a political prisoner without the possibility for extradition. Clearly, this narrative device has a dual objective: to analyze the complexities of the protagonist's life in flashbacks; and to discuss how Mexicans were (and still are) perceived in stereotypes—outlaws, drunkards, lazy workers—on this side of the Rio Grande. The notebooks go from October 22 to November 20, 1922, but intertwined are episodes from Flores Magón's childhood, his dealings with revolutionary leaders, photo opportunities with artists and politicos like the novelist Mariano Azuela, even premonitions of his own strange death from suffocation (a murder?). The novel shows how graceful men like Zapata, and complicated men like Flores Magón, wanted something better for Mexico, but the odds were against them: Catholicism isn't eradicable and the struggle to combat corruption and individual ambition is doomed. Martyrs will come and go, but Mexico is likely to remain the same.

In Day's own words in the introduction, *The Prison Notebooks of Ricardo Flores Magón* is "a novel of philosophical violence." While the protagonist, a mortal of wit and intelligence, is unable to foretell the future, close to his end he indirectly announces the 1926 Cristero rebellion and describes his country as frustrated and incapable of keeping hope alive. And indeed, one ought to remember that one by one, each of the



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Deadline: October 1, 1992. Announcement of Prize: December 18, 1992. The prize-winning essay will be published in COMMONWEAL's January 15, 1993, issue. This essay will become the property of the Graymoor Ecumenical Institute. All other essays will be returned to their authors after January 1.

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revolution's leaders was assassinated; not even one survived, and Mexico was left to be governed by mediocrity. Flores Magón's hatred for religion and his anticlericalism blinded him to the deep collective eschatology—a mixture of Christianity and Aztec theology—Mexicans have embraced since Hernán Cortés. As a result, Magón was glorified by his fellow politicians but alienated from his people. And much like the ideologues of the Russian Revolution, today he is just a footnote in history.

Douglas Day has turned this footnote, this Antichrist, into a metaphor of vision and blindness. *The Prison Notebooks of Ricardo Flores Magón*, a mosaic dealing with Mexican folklore, a novel about the futility of war, is required reading for those attracted to Greeneland or fascinated with Mexico—a land where people oscillate between earthly power and celestial glory. □

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 2)

without faith or courage. The Spirit descended upon them. They became a new people, a new creation. Filled with the Spirit, they ventured forth, proclaiming the Lord and his goodness.

Later they gathered at the Council of Jerusalem to look for the truth to help them to act as the much-needed leaders of the early church. Paul and Barnabas had such a love of the church that they confronted Peter and others with prayer, discussion, and argument. As a result, they all came to deeper understandings.

Today the church needs a new Pentecost. John Paul II, as did Peter, desperately needs men like Paul and Barnabas to teach, challenge, and assist him if he is to be a credible leader of a united church.

I am a priest fully dedicated to the ministry of the Lord. Ordained in Rome, I had the privilege to have the example of John XXIII for my four years of theological studies. I have been a priest since 1961 and a pastor for twenty-three years.

My day-to-day experience teaches me that the most discouraging condition of our church today is that our bishops do not respond to the crisis caused by the severe shortage of priests. Our priests suffer burnout. Many are not only discouraged but bitter because our bishops do not courageously face this systemic problem which weakens every part of the body of the church. Lay people over and again voice their concern that their spiritual, indeed sacramental needs are not met because of the reduced number in the ordained ministry.

Many priests see the papacy as dysfunctional and many of the bishops as codependent. This cannot be taken as a shocking or startling statement. The issues involved here have been covered extensively in national papers, magazines, and journals—both religious and secular.

Despite what some people say and write, I must believe that many of the bishops truly care about the priests and the church. If you do care, as you must, then you and others must stop talking about the pope and start talking to him. Rome's attitudes and practices relating to women, sexuality, and authority are not in harmony with the mind of the universal church. They have only the flimsiest historical and theological justifications, and they fly in the face of political, social, and economic realities.

I pray that the bishops will approve the voluntary return of those married priests who are otherwise in good standing with the church. The church suffers not only from reduced numbers of priests but also from a lowering of the quality of those who aspire to the priesthood. The experience of those priests who might return would be invaluable. If we love the church, we are bound by that love to consider optional celibacy for those called to be priests....

There is no more fitting time than Pentecost to pray with and for each other that we will be open to God's guiding Spirit, which to be sure will lead us down the sometimes winding path of warming, healing, and unity, and not down the straight but narrow road of chilling precedent. God bless you in all you do.

(REV.) JOSEPH BREEN

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To the Editors: It is sometimes stated in Catholic papers that the term "prochoice" is used as a euphemism for "pro-abortion." As a mother of five, grandmother of fifteen, and great-grandmother of (so far) six, I am definitely not pro-abortion. However, I am also a lifelong student and teacher of

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history and government. I think it should be pointed out that whoever decides whether an embryo (first three months) or fetus (later pregnancy) is to be carried to term or aborted is making a choice. If Congress makes a law on the subject and the president signs it, then it is a choice by government. If the mother decides, then she makes the choice. But if goverment has the power to choose, it might choose to allow only one child or two children per family, or only children that the parents can afford to support out of their own pockets. It might decide (as two states do now) that it will withhold welfare payments to provide food and shelter for more children than it will allow. Or it might limit families to one child apiece, as is done in China. With growing alarm about the "population bomb" on planet earth, this is quite possible.

To me it seems much safer to trust mothers to choose than to trust government. Most mothers love their children. Many put their own lives on the line to have them. They would have to be in desperate straits indeed to abort them.

HENRIETTA DANA RAYMOND

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A different movie

Nashville, Tenn.

To the Editors: I wonder if Richard Alleva and my husband and I saw different *Players* ["Robert Altman Is Back," June 5]. *The Player* we saw was a multi-layered satire with some of the most trenchant scenes I've seen in any Altman movie.

For example, the electric chair scene was (1) a satire on syrupy movie death scenes; (2) a satire on Julia Roberts's last "dying" movie; (3) a satire on Bruce Willis and his through-the-looking-glass movies; and (4) a satire on the plot where Griffin Mill, a murderer, also comes home to the little women through "bitchin' traffic."

The bedding scene was, in my viewing of it, of course, a nonflesh (faces don't count, do they?) sex scene. But was it sexy? I thought so. But I also saw terror in Tim Robbin's open mouth, a plea for understanding. So Altman undercuts the critics of nude love scenes while saying that love-making is both funny and terrible. No mean feat.

We saw a fundamentally comic movie, in pacing, dialogue, cutting, characters, plot....

We believe you need a new reviewer for this film. Get someone with a comic sense to discuss the teapot scene in the police station.

JANET MATTINGLY WELLS

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The Institute for Christian-Jewish Studies in Baltimore, Maryland, announces the foundation of the *Catholic-Jewish Colloquium.* Directed by Mary C. Boys and Sara S. Lee, the *Colloquium* is envisioned as a forum in which Jewish and Catholic religious educators may see their own faith in a new light through the prism of the other and learn how to prepare Jews and Catholics for interreligious dialogue by integrating it into religious education. The *Colloquium* will convene 20 educators: 10 each from the Jewish and Catholic communities in the northeastern United States. They will meet for five two-day expense-paid seminars in the Baltimore area over 18 months. Participants will be selected through an application process. Contact: Dr. Christopher Leighton, Institute for Christian-Jewish Studies, Inc., 1316 Park Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21217. (410) 523-7227.

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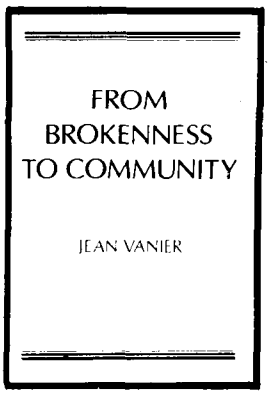

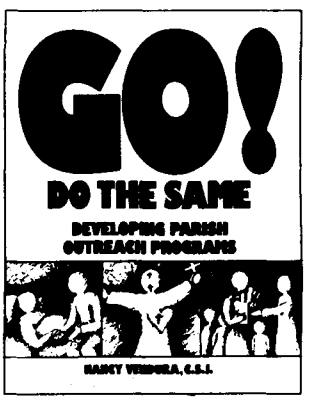

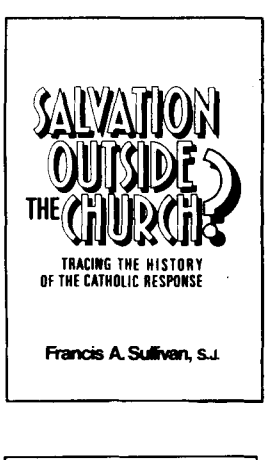

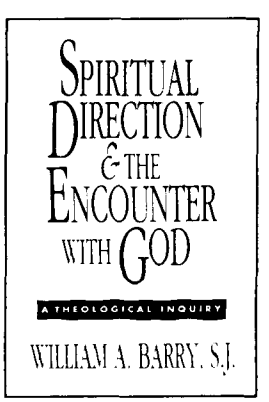

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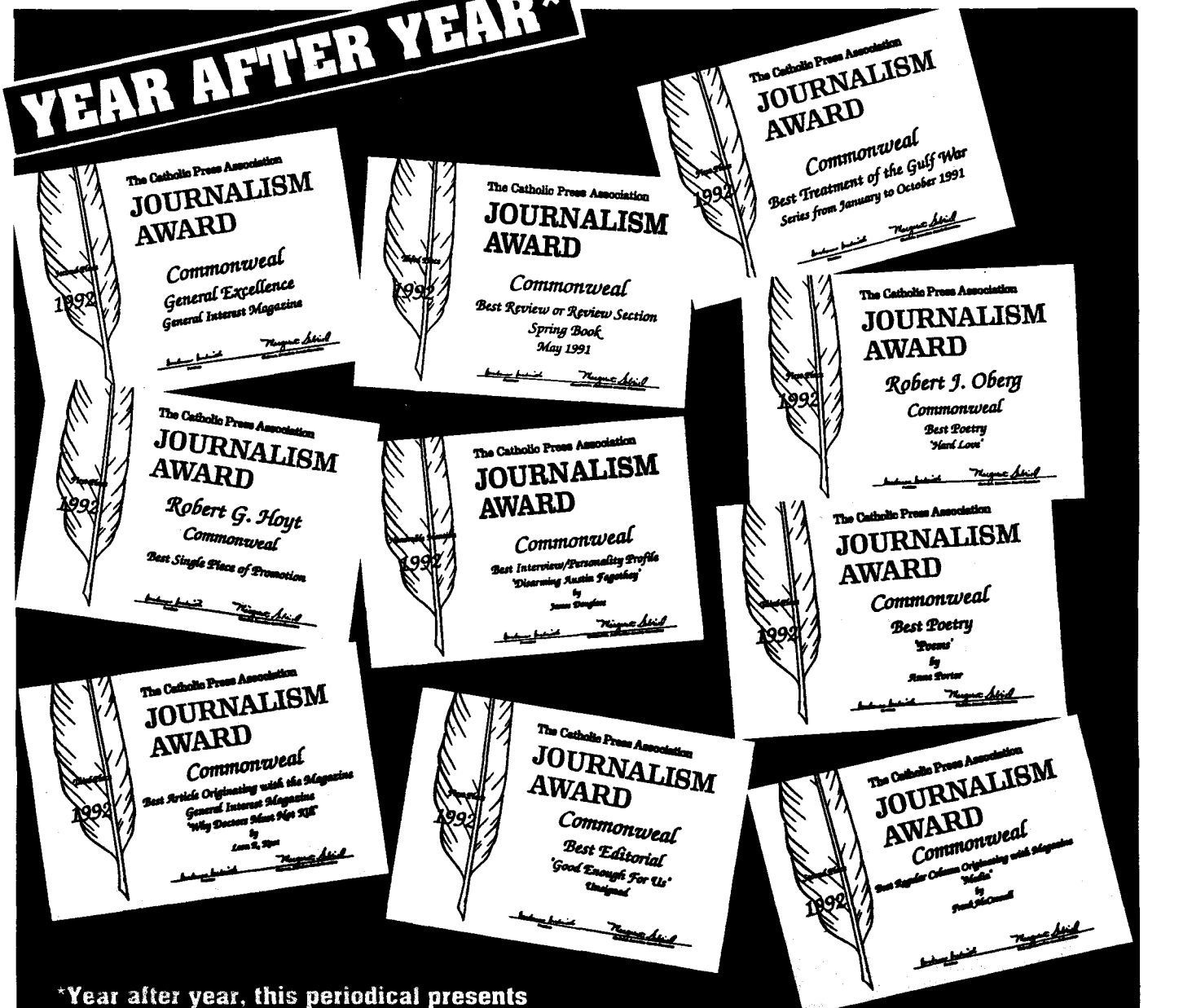

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